

NAG

NEW AGE GAMING MAGAZINE

south africa's leading technology & computer entertainment magazine



made in south africa



Lazy Gamer's guide to
The iPod

Previews of Alias, The Suffering,
Codename: Panzers, Fahrenheit

Also...

Anime, Role-Playing, Hardware and News

South Africans Compete Overseas
Today Korea, Tomorrow the World

Comparative Hardware Review
CD & DVD Writers

Game Reviews of Max Payne 2, Call of Duty
Halo: Combat Evolved, Soul Calibur II
Freedom Fighters, Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004
Hidden & Dangerous 2, C&C Generals: Zero Hour



112
pages of
wasted
paper



<< **This is a Cover CD.**
This is Jack's Lung.

South Africa **R 35.00**
Singapore **S\$ 8.90**
Malaysia **RM 14.90**



9 771028 053002

PCXboxGameCubeN-GageGBAPlayStation2

1 2

EXCLUSIVE!



GAME BOY ADVANCE

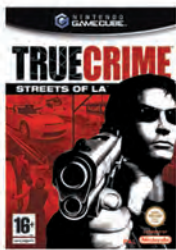


GAME BOY ADVANCE SP™



Я'ZONE





NINTENDO
GAMECUBE™



PSone™



PlayStation.2™



TOYS 'R' US



Toys R Us will match any retailers advertised price within 7 days if the advertisement appearing. We will match the price either at the time of purchase or within 7 days of the purchase provided you have your original receipt. Price matching applies provided the other retailer has stock at the time of purchase. Toys R Us coupons can not be used in addition to price matching.

Sandton City (011) 783-0327. Fourways (011) 467-0708/9. Westgate (011) 768-4084/7. Boksburg (011) 823-5111/2/3.
Atterbury, Pretoria (012) 991-4050. Bloemfontein (051) 444-0380. Pavilion, Durban (031) 265-0380. Gateway, Durban (031) 566-3772.
Bellville, Cape Town (021) 949-6030. Somerset West (021) 851-4123. Canal Walk (021) 552-8130. E&OE

Starters

(Out Now)

Rail Road Tycoon 3

Players of Railroad Tycoon 3 begin the game with a modest sum of capital at the beginning of the Golden Era of Railroading and expand their empire into major cities, while purchasing the latest locomotives, forcing competitors into bankruptcy, and exploiting the stock market to become the ultimate Railroad Tycoon.

Commandos 3: Destination Berlin

Commandos 3 takes tasty graphics and compelling play dynamic of the series to a whole new level. The game features a new interior engine that enables you to rotate the detailed environments and zoom in and out.

The Temple of Elemental Evil

Travel through new lands and experience the flavour of true adventure. As the story unfolds, adventurers will travel the world of Oerth, discover the besieged village of Hommlet, survive the filthy shire of Nulb and ultimately penetrate the ruins of the Temple of Elemental Evil, a beacon of darkness and despair in a world without hope.

Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne

Now, working together with Rockstar Games' New York-based production team, Remedy has combined Max Payne's hallmark game style with all new innovations and unmatched production values. Max Payne 2 dishes up the salami.

Empires: Dawn of the Modern World

Bearing the chef's personal endorsement, Empires: Dawn of the Modern World represents the only truly global RTS where players control unique civilizations across a timeline that spans from the Middle Ages to the modern era. Gamers lead their nation's economic growth and military campaigns in their effort to dominate the world.

Hidden & Dangerous 2

Hidden & Dangerous 2 is a first and third person tactical shooter that builds upon the tremendous success of Hidden & Dangerous. You lead a small squad of Allied soldiers deep behind enemy lines, to carry out secret missions during World War II. The gripping story line takes you to Europe, Africa, Burma, and other locations scattered across the globe. Salad is an optional extra.

Main Course

(Out Now)

Morrowind: Game of the Year Edition

Includes the original version of The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind, along with content from the two Morrowind expansions: Tribunal and Bloodmoon. This new product will allow gamers to continue their existing games of Morrowind and experience the new quests and areas offered by the expansions. (Chef's Special Today).

xiii

The perfect appetiser – not to be missed, XIII features a conspiracy of epic proportions, and players will unravel clues behind the story's compelling and mysterious events. XIII includes themes of amnesia, in which players must uncover sinister plots against themselves, the U.S. government, and even the president himself.

Uru: Ages Beyond Myst

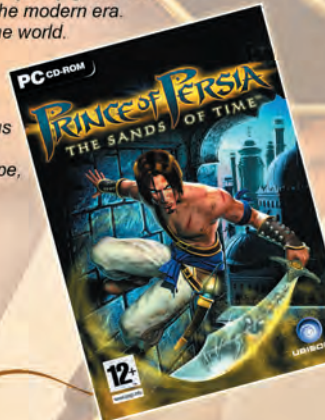
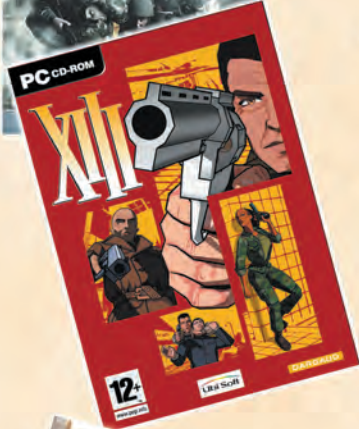
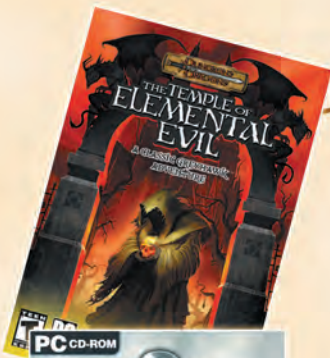
From the creators of Myst and Riven, Uru: Ages Beyond Myst is the next chapter of the Myst franchise and the most immersive and ambitious Myst experience ever created. The single-player game will be bigger, better, and more innovative than any of the previous Myst adventures.

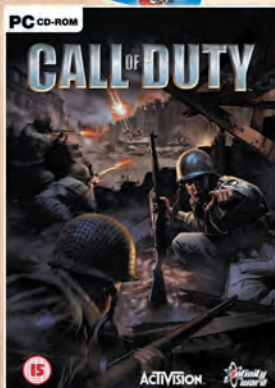
Pop Idol

The game features 40 top-ten music tracks for the virtual contestants to perform for the judges. Players will receive comments on their singing performances from the TV shows' judges – including a computer-generated Simon Cowell, complete with his colourful commentary.

Call of Duty

Call of Duty is an intense first-person action game that allows players to experience the movie-like intensity and gripping combat of World War II as never before – through the eyes of ordinary soldiers, fighting as part of a squad through the chaos of battle.





Dessert

(Available Late November)

Magic the Gathering: Battle Grounds

Platter for 2. Just as in the "Magic" card game, in "Magic: The Gathering - Battlegrounds" players will choose a duellist and up to two of "Magic's" five colours -- red, green, white, blue, and black -- to attempt to reduce their opponent's life to zero.

Beyond Good and Evil

When Jade takes a mysterious reconnaissance assignment for IRIS, a rebel organization that challenges the official version of events, she must question her own perception of truth. Angered and shaken by what she discovers, Jade begins a harrowing journey to get to the core of the conspiracy.

Legacy of Kain: Defiance

The next chapter in the epic Legacy of Kain series is a cutting-edge action/adventure game featuring more action than ever before. Take control of two powerful and highly evolved vampires: Kain, an all-powerful demigod, and Raziel, a demonic angel of death.

Terminator 3: War of the Machines

Humanity sits on the brink of extinction. The inevitable battle between man and machine has begun. War ravages the land as hardened Tech-Com fighters defend John Connor and others against the mechanized onslaught of the CRS force. Available with a side-order of onion rings.

Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3: Athena Sword

The elite multinational squad of counter-terrorist operatives returns in Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3: Athena Sword, the first mission pack of the wildly successful Rainbow Six 3: Raven Shield.

Civilization 3: Conquests

Civilization fans will discover intriguing new civilizations, units, wonders, technologies, and abilities to help them triumph in eight professionally designed conquests throughout history. Compete as one of the eight new Civilizations, each with its own powerful leader, unique units and special abilities, and lead your nation to its destiny.

Fallout Collection

Experience the "New Breed" of RPG that everyone's been talking about! Get 1998's RPG of the Year, Fallout, its highly acclaimed sequel, Fallout 2 and Fallout Tactics: Brotherhood of Steel for one low price! Set in the aftermath of a world-wide nuclear war, the Fallout Collection challenges you to survive in an unknown and dangerous world.

Wine List

(Available December)

Neverwinter Nights: Hordes of the Underdark

Neverwinter Nights: Hordes of the Underdark will include a new 20-hour single player campaign, designed for high-level characters and set amidst the famous city of Waterdeep and the foreboding Underdark from the D&D game's Forgotten Realms campaign setting.

Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time

"With Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time, Ubi Soft and Jordan Mechner are channelling their combined talents to breathe new life into the action/adventure genre. They're creating rich characters, white-knuckle action and a plot with more twists than the exotic, elaborate castle featured in the game," said Serge Hascoët, Editor in Chief, Ubi Soft Entertainment.

Lock On: Modern Air Combat

Feel the power of commanding a modern jet fighter. Fly a variety of combat aircraft in the most graphically rich, audio intense game environments ever created for a combat flight simulator. Lock On: Modern Air Combat combines a broad scope of play that includes a dynamic campaign system, an immersive combat environment, and in-your-face action.

Far Cry

An accidental hero finds himself on a remote tropical paradise, where a madman plays God; engineering various species of enhanced creatures to replace what he believes is a genetic dead-end... mankind. The game is set around 2020 on a set of tropical islands in the Pacific.

megarom
interactive

PROUDLY DISTRIBUTED BY MEGAROM INTERACTIVE (PTY) LTD.
011 234 2680 | SALES@MEGAROM.CO.ZA | WWW.MEGAROM.CO.ZA

PC
CD

Halo Invades



Now with online multiplayer



Violence
Blood and Gore

BUNGIE

gearbox
software

Microsoft
game studios

PC

HALO®

Join the battle. Live the epic adventure yourself. Unlock the secrets of Halo to save mankind from the ruthless Covenant swarms. Take the fight online in customizable head-to-head multiplayer competitions against up to 15 rival Master Chiefs. Break open a redesigned arsenal complete with the wicked new fuel rod gun. Then go mobile in the redeveloped Rocket Warthog and Banshee. This is Halo evolved.

www.microsoft.com/games/halo



F-ZERO GX

TM



NINTENDO
GAMECUBE™

NOW AVAILABLE

ON

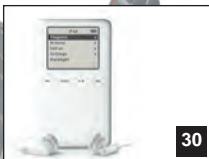
GAMECUBE



www.nintendo.co.za

Nintendo®
GAMING 24:7™

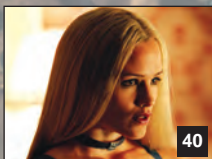
CONTENTS



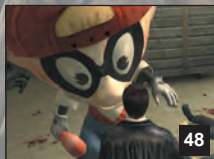
30



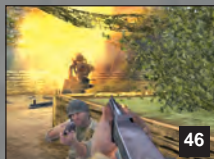
82



40



48



46



50



C&C Generals: Zero Hour Maps | Max Payne 2 Extras
 Cheat archive update | Call of Duty Demo | Halo Demo
 Starscape v1.2a Demo | Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Demo
 CATALYST v3.8 [Windows XP] | ForceWare v52.16 [Windows XP]
 Aliens vs. Predator movie teaser trailer
 Age of Mythology v1.08 Patch | TRON 2.0 v1.030 Patch
 Age of Mythology: The Titans v1.08 Patch
 Battlefield 1942 v1.5 Patch | Max Payne 2 Patch

Utilities

5 Days a Stranger | Ad-aware 6 | Dino MP3 Player RX5
 MYIE2 | PowerStrip 3.46 | Scanner 2.6 | Ultraping lite 1.2
 Winamp 2.91 | WinZip 8.1 | ZoneAlarm



78

REGULARS

- 12 Ed's Note
- 14 Technology News
- 18 PC News
- 22 Console News
- 30 Lazy Gamer's Guide: iPod
- 32 Legacy: Command & Conquer
- 34 Domain of The Basilisk
- 92 Community.za
- 96 Leisure Reviews: Music
- 98 Leisure Reviews: DVD
- 100 Leisure Reviews: Books
- 102 Alt.gaming
- 104 On the Web
- 106 Anime
- 108 Inbox
- 110 Game Over

FEATURES

- 26 rAge Recount
- 28 Today Korea, Tomorrow the World
- 82 Hardcore: CD & DVD Writer Roundup

PREVIEWS

- 36 Medal of Honor: Pacific Assault
- 38 The Suffering
- 40 Alias
- 42 Codename: Panzers
- 44 Knights of the Temple
- 46 Fahrenheit

REVIEWS

- 46 Call of Duty
- 48 Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne
- 50 Soul Calibur 2
- 52 Halo: Combat Evolved
- 54 Freedom Fighters
- 56 Space Colony
- 58 Hidden & Dangerous 2
- 60 Tiger Woods PGA 2004
- 62 Command & Conquer Generals: Zero Hour
- 63 Age of Mythology: Titans
- 64 Rugby 2004
- 66 TRON 2.0
- 68 The Italian Job: LA Heist
- 70 Hyperrails
- 70 Fire Chief
- 72 Zoo Tycoon Complete Collection
- 72 Tortuga: Pirates of the New World
- 73 Dark Chronicle
- 73 Alien vs Predator: Extinction
- 74 Another War
- 74 Knights of the Cross
- 75 BloodRayne
- 75 Zone of Enders: The Second Runner
- 90 Encarta Premium Edition 2004

HARDWARE

- 76 ASUS Wireless Technology
- 77 Mustek DV2000 Cam Corder
- 78 MS Wireless Intellimouse Explorer
- 79 HP DVD Movie Writer DC3000
- 79 Dual Play Digital MP3 Player
- 80 MS Wireless Desktop Elite Keyboard
- 80 D-Link TV Tuner

PC
 PC
 PS2
 PC
 PC
 PC
 PC
 PC
 PC
 PC
 PC
 PC
 PS2
 PC
 PC
 PC
 PS2
 PS2
 PC
 PC
 PS2
 PS2
 PC

These few brave companies make the Cover CD a reality every month... Think fondly of them!

megarom
interactive



Microsoft



Discover the great indoors.



With 10% off.

There really is so much waiting to be discovered indoors, and now with **10% off** all the latest and greatest games from 24 November*, as well as **to your door delivery for a mere R17.50**, you really would be crazy not to go to **www.kalahari.net**

* For a limited period only.

www.kalahari.net 

A WORLD OF ENTERTAINMENT ON YOUR DOORSTEP

The safe bet - no imagination required

World War II First Person Shooters are becoming popular to develop because they require no creative input further than a few reference books from the library and watching Saving Private Ryan 8 times. This isn't to say the games are bad - they just lack any imagination. Everything is predetermined - locations, weapons and yes even the actual events. Is this a bad thing? Yes.

A similar creative chokehold and lack of innovation is permeating everything we see from across the ocean and it all stems from the control the mass market consumer has in America and everywhere else; this isn't a finger pointing and blaming session, just a reference to a reality. This mass market only plays game type A or watches movie genre B and will rarely try anything new. This is the same reason games like Sacrifice and Giants never attained the successes they deserved (you don't see Sacrifice 2 in the news). At E3 2003 there was a distinct lack of truly original games. This isn't anything new - it's been like this for a year or two now.

This 'problem' has now been further perpetuated with a number of smaller independent UK development studios liquidating this year [just recently Mucky Foot]. Oddly enough despite the gloomy outlook independent developers face, the gaming industry is booming thanks to the sheer muscle power of the big publishers who are using in-house teams to develop games, this way they have complete control over the product, license and people - oh, and the money. This isn't to say they're making bad games now, but they will eventually start running out of good ideas [see above paragraph].

My trend prediction is that all these new gamers, like all us veteran gamers, will eventually tire of the 'safe' software and start looking for something different, this after playing the third 'similar' World War II shooter in a row or Commandos 6, or heaven forbid, Rugby 2008. Then the big publishing houses will have nothing to offer and when they desperately look around for all those upcoming dynamic development companies that used to knock at their doors with games offering innovation and imagination all they're going to find are remnants of a once thriving industry as all the truly talented people will be programming accounting software.

What can be done? Nothing at this stage - all we can do is make sure we always support those few rare games that dare to be different instead of spending our money on the safe bet.

Road kill

Wrapping up I'll just say this, drive safely over the Christmas period as you all lemming your way to the popular holiday hotspots in SA and remember, your mangled body parts aren't going to enjoy the holiday as much as a whole and healthy version of you.

And on that positive note make sure you get the January issue of NAG [out end December] - it's probably going to be bigger than this one thanks to all the games that just keep arriving everyday - life at NAG is good!

Michael James, Editor, NAG Magazine



G.I. James

The cover this month features characters from Activision's Call of Duty - one of the few games that saw the usually calm and together James banging his keyboard in frustration while trying to justify that the poor play being demonstrated was thanks to the fact he didn't get a rifle when the mission started, and when he tried to run away they shot him in the back while shouting some rude Russian phrases. Okay then. The other [tiny] characters are from Namco's Soul Calibur 2 - just the kind of meaty thumping and bumping you need over the weekend with a few buddies - I'm talking about the PlayStation game BTW!

Caption of the Month Competition



Bee fun knee

Each month we'll select a screenshot from

one of the games in the issue and write a funny caption for it, well... we'll try and make it funny...

Your job is to see if you can come up with an even funnier caption and send it to: ed@nag.co.za

Subject: **December Caption**

If you use the wrong subject in your e-mail it'll get deleted...

Your prize: Our sponsor for the screenshot of the month competition is Vivendi Universal Games. They said they'll give us something interesting each month... if we don't want it we'll be sure to send it along to the winner mentioned to the right of this... here...?



'It's all in your head' - nag's [93% lame] effort



'What do you mean Microsoft Flight Simulator is your only formal training?' - Steven Wright

NAG Review Rigs supplied by:

Your Components Solution Provider



GIGABYTE TECHNOLOGY



Specification

Intel P4 3.1 GHz 512KB
Gigabyte GA-8SG800 Motherboard
NVIDIA GeForce4 Ti 4200 with AGP8X
AOpen A90E 19" Monitor | TwinMOS 1GB RAM DDR 266
Seagate Barracuda 80GB | AOpen CD ROM
AOpen Tower Chassis | Logitech Cordless Desktop



AOpen

Component Solutions
www.aopen.co.za

Aeolus

Best performed Geforce FX5950 GPU



Aeolus Geforce FX 5950 Ultra

nVIDIA Geforce FX5950 GPU
256mb fast DDR video memory
CineFX II Engine, 475MHz core clock.
DVI, Video Out, CRT connectors - Full nVIEW functions support
Cinematic quality special effects and studio quality color
Free bundled with WinDVD support Deluxe DVD / VCD play back
Support 8X AGP and Direct X 9.0



Geforce FX5700 Ultra

nVidia FX5700 Ultra



- nVIDIA Geforce FX5700 Ultra GPU
- 128mb fast DDR video memory
- CineFX II Engine, 475MHz core clock.
- DVI, Video Out, CRT connectors
- Full nVIEW functions support
- Cinematic quality special effects and studio quality colour
- Support 8X AGP and Direct X 9.0

Geforce FX5700

nVidia FX5700



- nVIDIA Geforce FX5700 GPU
- 128mb fast DDR video memory
- CineFX II Engine, 425MHz core clock.
- DVI, Video Out, CRT connectors
- Full nVIEW functions support
- Cinematic quality special effects and studio quality colour
- Support 8X AGP and Direct X 9.0

Geforce FX5600XT

nVidia FX5600XT



- nVIDIA Geforce FX5600XT GPU
- 128mb fast DDR video memory
- CineFX II Engine, 425MHz core clock.
- DVI, Video Out, CRT connectors
- Full nVIEW functions support
- Cinematic quality special effects and studio quality colour
- Support 8X AGP and Direct X 9.0

Geforce FX5200

nVidia FX5200



- nVIDIA Geforce FX5200 GPU
- 128mb fast DDR video memory
- CineFX II Engine, 400MHz core clock.
- DVI, Video Out, CRT connectors
- Full nVIEW functions support
- Cinematic quality special effects and studio quality colour
- Support 8X AGP and Direct X 9.0



Distributed by:

rectron
www.rectron.net

Component Solutions



tech news:

Tapwave Zodiac



The latest handheld console on which to play games, listen to music, take pictures and video and run an enhanced version of the Palm OS. Retailing for between \$299 and \$399, the Tapwave Zodiac seems like the perfect must-have gadget. Note to self: Fire my secretary and order in a Zodiac.

LG L2320A LCD Monitor



A 23" TFT-LCD wide-screen colour monitor that comes with a Media Station (a housing with the various inputs and one output cable to your desktop). That Christmas wish list is getting longer and longer.



Nyko Air Flo Mouse

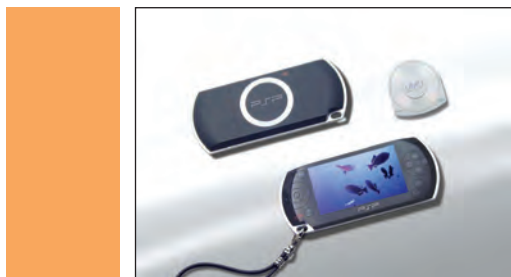
Cool your hands down while frantically fragging your opponents at your next LAN party. This dual button optical mouse retails for \$29.99 and has been designed with both right and left handed people in mind.



LG DA-SW6100

Wireless speakers - now there's a brilliant idea. Using Bluetooth technology this slick speaker system from LG will have your friends drooling with envy. We can't think of a better way to blow your bonus this year.

Sony PSP



A few months back Sony announced their foray into the handheld market and much speculating was done in the industry as to what it would look like. Well, here is the first mock-up of this unit. We like.



Enzo Ferrari Force Feedback Wheel

Now you too can experience being behind the wheel of a Ferrari when you race your shiny new car around the track on your PC using this fancy racing wheel. The damage? Only €89.99.

Nostromo SpeedPad



The Nostromo SpeedPad n52 is an upgrade from the n50 in that it now has a 360-degree rotating mouse wheel with a switch and 14 programmable keys, among a list of other nifty features. It will be retailing for \$49.99.

Thrustmaster 5.1 Sound System



These speakers are fully compatible with all gaming consoles, PC's, DVD players, TV's and VCR's. Irritate your neighbours at a mere cost of €179.00.



Logitech Extreme Action Controller

Gaming luxury for your PS2. Sporting leather grips, a metallic finish, gold-plated connector pins and rubber-capped analog sticks, at \$24.95, this is the Rolls Royce of gamepads.

LG-SC8000



The latest smartphones from LG will be going on sale in Korea in December. The list of features includes video and MP3 playback, photo editing, email, MMS, GPS and PC sync.

AOpen[®]
Component Solutions
www.aopen.co.za

OPTICAL SOLUTIONS

Component Solutions

www.rectron.co.za



YOUR FREEDOM OF CHOICE

Technology news from the other side

by Iwan Pienaar

PLAYING GAMES IS GOOD FOR YOU

A recent study conducted by researchers at the Universite du Quebec en Outaouais in Canada has found that computer games can be used to treat people's phobias. It found that PC games can be used as a style of therapy that exposes people to what scares them in a controlled setting (I guess these researchers have never played Postal 2). Games that allow users to construct and change environments, used with a headset that lets wearers simulate virtual reality, were found to be just as effective at stimulating phobic responses as dedicated simulation machines. Normally, people with phobias are treated with exposure therapy. This gradually exposes them to settings that scare them in an effort to reduce the fear and get them to relax and get over their phobia. The studies conducted to date have dealt with people suffering from acrophobia (fear of heights), claustrophobia (fear of tight spaces) and aracanophobia (fear of spiders). A group of 13 people with phobias and 13 non-phobic people were tested using Half-Life and Unreal Tournament on low-end PCs with headphones (good thing that these tests were not run with any triskaidekaphobics in attendance). The subjects (or should that be victims?) were run through several simulations and then tested on a series of scales to measure their response. The researchers used Half-Life to create a spider-filled environment for arachnophobes and Unreal Tournament to simulate heights and tight space for acrophobics and claustrophobics respectively.

THQ STARTS DEVELOPING FOR NEW CONSOLES

Game publisher THQ has begun development work for the upcoming next-generation of game consoles. It also plans to begin developing software for the upcoming Sony PSP handheld gaming device soon. "We believe that the next-generation will launch in 2006," says Brian Farrell, chief executive of THQ. However, Farrell believes that the company will be prepared for a 2005 launch date for the new consoles. It is widely expected that the Sony PlayStation 3, Nintendo GameCube 2 and Microsoft Xbox 2 video game consoles will all be released around 2005. THQ is expecting emulators for the new hardware to arrive before the end of the year.



Hip2b² Digital Camera

The Mark Shuttleworth Foundation has been formed to generate funds for education initiatives in SA. Available from YDE in mid-December, this digital camera is one of many items in this range which is aimed at the youth. Grab it for R599.



Power Joy III Retro Arcade Game System

The PowerJoy III is a portable, self-contained gaming system with 84 classic games built-in. For \$39.99 you're either into this type of thing or you're not.



QPS Que007 Portable Digital Theater



A DVD burner/CD-RW/DVD-ROM that can plug into your TV or your computer. Handy.
www.qps-inc.com

Intel Pentium 4 Extreme Edition



The Intel Pentium 4 3.20 GHz Extreme Edition processor has been designed for high-end gamers and computing enthusiasts utilizing Hyper-Threading Technology. We give you the low down and dirty on this new processor next month in our hardware section.

Nokia 7700



Nokia has recently announced five new phones - the top of the range being the 7700. Features include a camera, a pen input touchscreen, web access, 64mb memory and the technology to enable movie watching on it. It is expected to retail at around €450.

Creative Sound Blaster Wireless Music



For around \$240 this digital audio receiver system will provide easy access to PC-based digital tunes through your home stereo system.



Sierra Wireless Voq

The Sierra Wireless Voq professional phone is the 2nd smart phone in the USA to feature Microsoft's Windows Mobile 2003 - the operating system formerly known as Smartphone (formerly known as Stinger). It will be launched in the US in the first quarter of 2004 for around \$550.
www.sierrawireless.com

AOpen®
Component Solutions
www.aopen.co.za

NOTEBOOK SOLUTIONS

Component Solutions

www.rectron.co.za



YOUR FREEDOM OF CHOICE



pc news:

UT 2004 next year

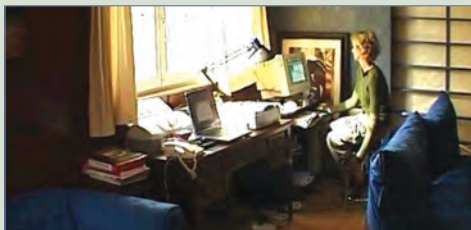
Bad news for those fans hoping to get UT 2004 in their Christmas stocking this year. Epic has said that more time is needed for them to complete work on the game and expect it to be ready in February 2004.

New Dig Dug record

The World Record holder for high scores on Tron, Centipede, Domino Man and Super Zaxxon has just added another record to his name. Donald Hayes of Windham, New Hampshire has recently added Dig Dug to his list of accomplishments.

Thrilled by the Internet

Ever heard of an Internet thriller? Well neither have we, until now that is. Ubisoft is developing an Internet thriller titled In Memorium which will see you solving the mystery of a man's disappearance by outwitting a serial killer. You will be given clues on various web sites, interact with the serial killer via e-mail and peruse movie footage while battling your way through 40 puzzles. Intrigued yet?



Half-Life 2 delayed

After the debacle of the theft of the Half-Life 2 source code Vivendi has announced that the game will now be released in April 2004. This will be the second time that this highly anticipated title has been delayed.

Breed not done

Christmas is turning into a really dull affair, what with all the great titles being delayed till 2004. Breed now joins the trend. Apparently hardware-compatibility issues have been discovered which need addressing.

incoming:

Ubi announces flight sim

Ubisoft has confirmed that an expansion for IL-2 Sturmovik: Forgotten Battles will be available in early 2004. In addition they are also working with 1C Maddox Games to develop a World War II combat flight sim. The game will take place during the Battle of Britain (which incidentally will be the name of the game) and players will be able to fly under several flags including Italy, Britain and Germany. This game is scheduled for release sometime in 2005.



Racing across all platforms



A fast-paced racing game which will include action packed stunts and the use of weapons will be available in 2004. FX Racing will be released on PC, PS2, GC and Xbox.

Making life work

Bored with your own life? Then you'll enjoy controlling someone else's in Singles. Essentially a life simulation game, you can choose from sixteen players and set up home in an apartment. The objective is to create and nurture a relationship between two people using elements to create romance, friendship, fun, sex and compatibility with each other. Make their lives better and you will be more successful in the game. Due for release early 2004.



PC CD-ROM

WORMS 3D



GET READY TO PLAY...
TEAM 17
SEGA
WWE

pc news:

Bring order to the chaos



Did you enjoy indulging in the chaos and pandemonium of a rioting city? Then you'll be pleased to know that State of Emergency 2 is currently in development for PC, PS and Xbox. So brush up on those combat moves and get ready for some hectic action. You have until the end of 2004 to figure out how best to destroy an entire city and everything in it.

Roll the dice please



Roleplaying in a medieval world. Journeying through a country to thwart an evil plot to destroy a kingdom. Sound like your type of game? Then The Chronicles of Narnia is what you need to keep an eye out for. The game will take place in a 3D world and includes your standard rpg fare of spells, magical weapons, character races and, wait for it, multiple endings.

Dungeon Siege in Hollywood

Dr. Uwe Boll, who has recently completed work on the House of the Dead movie and has also signed up to do the BloodRayne movie will be bringing Gas Powered Games' Dungeon Siege to a theater near you towards the end of 2004.

An estimated budget of \$50 million is what it will take to make this a reality.

Boll said, "Based on the success of House of the Dead, I believe Dungeon Siege contains major crossover potential because of its unique blend of action and fantasy, on the order of Lord of the Rings."

John Romero goes to Midway

The legendary Tom Hall and John Romero will be moving to Midway to develop new games. CEO David Zucker hopes this move will inject some creative spice in their lineup.

American McGee on a mission

As the saying goes you can't keep a good horse down...or something like that.

Not one to follow the sheep, as it were, America McGee will be bringing gamers into your very own lounge. Yes it's another game show concept about to take America by storm.

Focusing on the gaming culture by bringing gamers from around America to compete against in-house experts, McGee's vision is to put the fun back into games on television.

The show will focus primarily on multiplayer games.

Activision cancels games

The Quake III engine powered first person shooter titled Trinity has been cancelled as have two sports games, Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder 2 and the sequel to Street Hoops.

Activision has stated the reason for cancellation of these titles is that they didn't anticipate them performing to expectations.

Doom III has also been moved into the 2005 fiscal year, which begins in April 2004.

AOpen[®]

Component Solutions
www.aopen.co.za

DESKTOP SOLUTIONS

Component Solutions

www.rectron.co.za

YOUR FREEDOM OF CHOICE



pc news:

Wargaming

Based on the award-winning World War II wargame, World In Flames will be an adaptation of the latest deluxe version where players will battle it out in a World War II environment. "We decided some years ago that it was time to bring World In Flames to the computer," added Harry Rowland, managing director of ADG. "Matrix Games has been working with us on an excellent adaptation of Empires In Arms, and we are confident they will do a great job with World In Flames as well."

New look, same budget...



[Gauteng]: Northgate based Budget Technologies have moved their operation to a spiffy new store in the centre's new wing, opposite Woolworths.

It may be a new store, but you can still expect the good value and expert service and advice that regular visitors have come to expect. Call them on [011] 794 4450.

Jules Verne's book comes to life

A Jules Verne inspired adventure game, Journey to the Centre of the Earth, set in 2005 will be released in February.

It will feature 100's of puzzles, around 30 characters and two alternate endings.

Journey to the Centre of the Earth is in development at Micro Application.

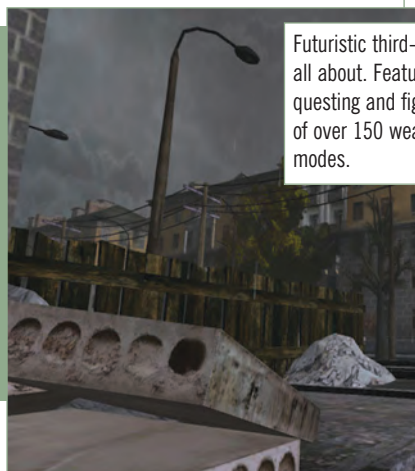
incoming:

More rucks and mauls



Haven't had your fill of the rugby fever yet? Think you can do a better job at managing a team to greatness? Enter Pro Rugby Manager 2004. Not only will you be able to pick from over 100 sides and 50 national teams playing in 13 authentic stadiums, but will be able to sit behind your computer and show your domination online as you take part in the online league. The game should be available in March 2004.

The future in 2062



Futuristic third-person strategy and role playing is what Phase: Exodus is all about. Featuring four playable characters the game will see you questing and fighting using your stealth techniques as well as your array of over 150 weapons. The game will also feature single and multiplayer modes.

Good cop bad cop



Riot Police is an action and strategy game where you have bring order to 16 riot scenarios using batons, rubber bullets, beanbag shotguns, and police walls, as well as enlisting the help of other riot police to eradicate the looters, protestors and militants. Due for release soon.



WWW.PLAYSTATION.CO.ZA

PlayStation 2

3



Battlefield Command renamed



Codemasters upcoming World War II strategy game, Battlefield Command has been renamed to Wartime Command: The Battle for Europe 1939-1945. The game will cover every major European battle of WWII and will be released in Q2 2004.

Larry makes his comeback

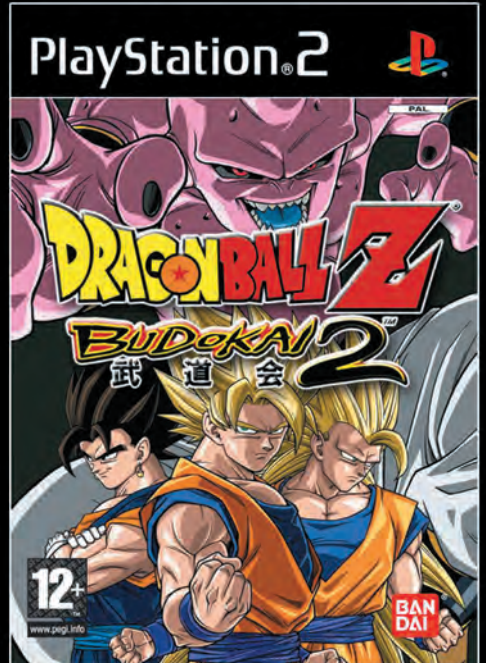


Leisure Suit Larry: Magna Cum Laude will be making its way onto consoles and PC's towards the end of next year. Starring Larry's nephew, Larry Lovage, the player takes on college in typical Larry style, where Larry spends more time with the lady folk than studying. At some point he ends up on a reality TV dating show competing for the prize of a, yep you guessed it, lovely lady. Hmmm, we all know where this is headed.

More WWII action



Hidden and Dangerous 2 will soon be sporting an expansion. Apparently there were a number of features planned for the game that weren't included because of a timing issue, with most of the content already being close to completion. It has been hinted at that co-op multiplayer will form part of the package.



ATARI



ATARI

Distributed Exclusively by World Web Entertainment
Tel: 011 4620150 www.ww.e.co.za email: sales@ww.e.co.za
All rights and trademarks and logos are copyright of their respective owners

GET READY TO PLAY...

console news:

N-Gage

As part of a multi-title agreement, Electronic Arts will be releasing FIFA Soccer 2004 on the N-Gage. The game will support multiplayer via Bluetooth in all its 3D graphic glory so you and your buddy can pick your favourite teams and battle it out on your fancy new phones.

Following the recent worldwide launch of the N-Gage it has been reported that 400 000 units of the handheld console were sold globally during the first two weeks of it being available. Although this figure isn't particularly high in comparison to other consoles Nokia have remarked that the American market still needs a lot more focused attention. In a bid to try and encourage consumer spend on their unit, the price was temporarily dropped to \$199 for a few weeks in November.

PlayStation

Konami has confirmed development of Silent Hill 4, which apparently will be out before the end of 2004. However it appears that they are not working exclusively on this project at the moment. While not confirming any further details, they have admitted to a new game being in the works. At this point details on this new title remain a mystery.

After a particularly successful launch of their groundbreaking EyeToy: Play, Sony have announced that over 1 million units have been sold in Europe since it launched 4 months ago. This is remarkable considering that the USA and Japan have yet to see this product on their shelves.

Square have confirmed that Final Fantasy XIII will not be released this year, as originally stated. Due to extra development time being required they have not given a firm release date for 2004, but with their current financial year end being at the end of March 2004, it looks unlikely that it will be any time before then.

With development already having commenced on Grand Theft Auto 4 for next generation consoles, it has been revealed that a quasi-sequel to GTA Vice City is on the cards for a late 2004 release.

At the Toyko Games Show a few months back Sony announced a scaled down version of Gran Turismo 4, which will be released at the beginning of December. Titled The Prologue Edition, the game will feature 5

incoming:

BloodRayne 2 PS2 | Xbox | PC



Hot on the heels of the recent BloodRayne, a sequel has been announced for release on PC, PS2 and Xbox. Based on the story from the original title the player will take on the role of a half-human, half vampire using the new Infernal Engine. It will feature new bosses, environments and supernatural powers and include pole combat, rail sliding and advanced melee fighting.

Dead to Rights II: Hell to Pay PS2 | Xbox



Namco has announced that a sequel to Dead to Rights will be appearing on store shelves towards the end of 2004. Playing the part of Jack Slate (your average garden variety policeman), and accompanied by his trusty companion Shadow, the story-driven game will see you fighting the criminal organisations of the underworld. Expect to see melee-combat weapons, a 360 degree brawling system and an all-new spherical, slow-motion diving system.



console news:

courses which will be set in New York, the Grand Canyon, Italy and Japan. You will be able to select from any of the 50 cars available and attend the Driving School, where you will learn how to drive and race. This title will retail for a lower price than the full version of the game and is focusing on attracting new comers to the game as well as catering to the hardcore enthusiasts out there. The bad news however is that this disc will only be released in Japan.

Xbox

Microsoft has released its first two Xbox games that utilize Fonix voice-command technology. Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3 and SWAT: Global Strike Team feature voice command software that allows game developers to incorporate a voice command interface into their game; players will then have access to games features, commands and control functions that will make for a more immersive and realistic experience whilst playing the game.

Wars and Warriors: Joan of Arc has been confirmed for an Xbox release in May 2004. The game will contain eight campaigns encompassing the battles and weaponry used when Joan of Arc led the resistance to the English invasion of France.

Capcom's cel-shaded racing game, **Auto Modellista** is set to appear on the Xbox in January 2004. It will feature Xbox Live support, single player mode, VJ mode and arcade mode.



- ▲ GT 4 Prologue Edition [PS2]
- ▼ Joan of Arc [Xbox]



Nintendo

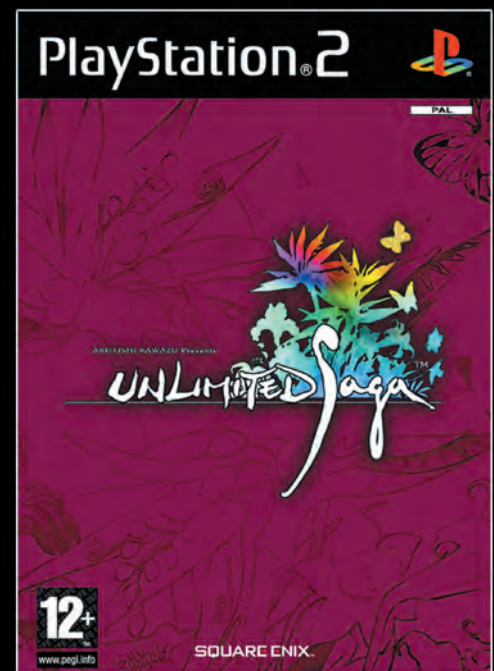
The first series of **Pokemon Battle-e Cards** has recently been released in America. To be able to make use of these cards you will need to have an e-Reader accessory for your Game Boy Advance. You then slide your cards into the e-Reader and it will allow you to play new levels, get new power-ups and master strategic techniques. The Pokemon Battle-e cards will add new trainers to your Ruby and Sapphire games and are made up of two nine-card sets with each set containing eight Battle Cards and one Enigma Berry Card. Three themes are now available - Freezing Ray, Hidden Ruins and Iron Defense. Nintendo have also just released a set of e-Reader cards for Super Mario Advance 4: Super Mario Bros. 3. Apparently we will get to see the e-Reader in Europe and other territories some time in 2004.

Van Helsing [PS2 | Xbox]

Another movie to game conversion to hit the shelves in mid 2004 will be released by Vivendi on the PS2 and Xbox. Based on the upcoming action-adventure movie of the same name, the game will be played from a third person perspective and will see you hunting monsters the likes of Dracula, Wolf Man and Frankenstein in the setting of 19th century Transylvania.



ATARI



ATARI

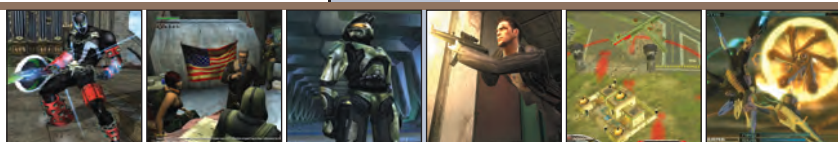
Distributed Exclusively by World Web Entertainment
Tel: 011 4620150 www.ww.e.co.za email: sales@ww.e.co.za
All rights and trademarks and logos are copyright of their respective owners

GET READY TO PLAY... 

scores, charts and release dates:

PC Web Scores

Title	NAG	gamespy.com	gamespot.com	pc.ign.com
Halo: Combat Evolved	73	5	9	8.2
Max Payne 2	90	5	9	9.4
Call of Duty	92	5	9	9.3
C&C Generals: Zero Hour	80	4	8.6	9
Freedom Fighters	84	4	9.3	8.4



Console Web Scores

Title	NAG	ign.com	gamespot.com	gamespy.com
Soul Calibur II [PS2]	80	9.2	8.5	93
The Italian Job [PS2]	78	6.8	4.4	65
Zone of Enders [PS2]	79	8.5	6.1	77
BloodRayne [PS2]	55	7.5	7.2	73
Dark Chronicle [PS2]	90	n/r	n/r	n/r
AvP Extinction [PS2]	63	6.1	7.2	75



www.musica.co.za

CHARTS

- PS 2 The Getaway Platinum
- PS 2 Rugby 2004
- PS 2 Tekken 4 Platinum
- PS 2 Smackdown Shut Your Mouth Platinum
- PS 2 GTA Vice City
- PC C&C Generals: Zero Hour
- PS 2 Gran Turismo 3 Platinum
- PS 2 GT Concept 2002 Platinum
- PS 2 Grand Theft Auto 3 Platinum
- PS 2 Crash Bandicoot 5
- PS 2 Colin McRae 4
- PS 2 Tony Hawk Pro Skater 4 Platinum
- PS 2 Tiger Woods 2004
- PS 2 WRC II Extreme Platinum
- PC Sims Superstar
- PS 2 ATV Offroad Fury 2
- PC Medal of Honour Allied Assault
- PS 2 SSX Tricky Platinum
- PS 2 Italian Job
- PS 2 Eye Toy

Chart information supplied by Musica
for the period 1- 31 October 2003

Selected International PC Release Dates

Lock On: Modern Air Combat	Simulator	Dec 5	
Beyond Good & Evil	Action	Dec 5	
Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time	Action	Dec 5	
Rainbow Six 3: Athena Sword	Tactical	Dec 5	
Dungeon Siege: Legends of Aranna	RPG	Dec 5	
Battlefield Vietnam	Action	Jan 30	
Forever Worlds	Adventure	Jan 30	
Lula 3D	Adventure	Jan 31	
EverQuest II	MMORPG	Jan 31	
Sniper Elite	FPS	Jan 31	
Pilot Down	RPG	Jan 31	
Jack the Ripper	Adventure	Jan 31	
Alias	Action	Jan 31	
Vietcong Fist Alpha	FPS	Jan 31	
Deus Ex: Invisible War	FPS	Feb 6	
X2: The Threat	Simulator	Feb 6	
KnightShift	RPG	Feb 13	
Singles	Simulator	Feb 13	
Gangland	Strategy	Feb 14	
Sacred	RPG	Feb 20	
Neighbours from Hell 2	Strategy	Feb 20	
Psychotoxic	FPS	Feb 27	
Unreal Tournament 2004	FPS	Feb 27	
Ryzom	MMORPG	Feb 28	
Medal of Honor: Pacific Assault	FPS	Feb 28	
Riftrunner	RPG	Feb 28	

Selected International Console Release Dates

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	Xbox	Action	Dec 9
Galidor: Defenders of the Outer Dimension	PS2	Action	Q4 2003
Mission: Impossible: Operation Surma	PS2	Action	Dec 9
R: Racing Evolution	PS2 Xbox GC	Driving	Dec 9
Yu Yu Hakusho: Spirit Detective	GBA	Adventure	Dec 9
Asterix & Obelix XXL	GC	Action	Q4 2003
FIFA Soccer 2004	NGE	Sports	Jan 15
Ninja Gaiden	Xbox	Action	Dec 15
Rayman 3	NGE	Action	Dec 15
Red Faction	NGE	Action	Dec 15
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm	PS2	Action	Dec 16
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell	NGE	Action	Dec 16
Need for Speed Underground	GBA	Driving	Dec 22
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II	PS2 Xbox GBA	Role-Playing	Jan 5
Fallout: Brotherhood of Steel	PS2 Xbox	Role-Playing	Jan 5
Final Fantasy XI	PS2	Role-Playing	Jan 6
FirstStrike: Grant City Anti-Crime	PS2	Action	Jan 6
Harvest Moon: A Wonderful Life	GC	Role-Playing	Jan 6
Karaoke Revolution	PS2	Puzzle	Jan 6
Mafia	Xbox PS2	Action	Jan 6
Sega Rally	NGE	Driving	Jan 6
Sonic Heroes	PS2 Xbox GC	Adventure	Jan 6
The Fast and the Furious	PS2	Driving	Jan 6
X-Files: Resist or Serve	PS2	Adventure	Jan 6
Charlie's Angels	PS2	Action	Jan 13
Dead or Alive Online	Xbox	Action	Jan 15

REC

30 03

11:09:37

78

MANHUNT

REC
SAVE

THE FINAL CUT



R



R



R



R

WWW.ROCKSTARGAMES.COM/MANHUNT



PlayStation 2



"PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. © 2003 Rockstar Games, Inc. Manhunt and the Manhunt logo are trademarks of Take-Two Interactive Software, Inc. Rockstar Games and the R logo are registered trademarks of Take-Two Interactive Software, Inc. Rockstar Games and Rockstar North are subsidiaries of Take-Two Interactive Software, Inc. All other marks and trademarks are properties of their respective owners. All Rights Reserved. Product names are the trademarks of their respective owners, and not of Rockstar Games, Inc., and are included for entertainment purposes only. No product, person or establishment appearing or mentioned in this game has endorsed this game or any of the actions described or displayed herein or is in any way associated with Rockstar Games, Inc. Note: Rockstar will be following ESA guidelines for M rated games in the marketing of this game. This game contains violent language and behavior and may not be appropriate for persons under the age of 17. The story, names and incidents portrayed herein are fictitious. No identification or similarity to actual persons, living or dead, or to actual events is intended or should be inferred. Any resemblance is coincidental. The makers and publishers of this videogame do not in any way endorse, condone or encourage this kind of behavior.

rAge

writer: Ezekiel Darcon



With only a few days to spare, preparations for the event seemed to climax almost cataclysmically. The end result - an event critically acclaimed by The Dome (rAge officially won the award for 'BEST NEW EXHIBITION IN 2003'), and one that shall not be forgotten by all those who attended. With a tour de force of exhibitors and an attendance to match, more than a few eyebrows were raised in dawning comprehension to just how big gaming is (and can be) in this country.



Much to the dismay of both the casual attendants and those who decided to dedicate an entire weekend to participate in the NAG LAN @ rAge, Dome Management sprung a surprise decree on the event. No external food was allowed to be brought into the premises, forcing attendants to purchase the rather exorbitantly priced foods available from the retailers inside the Dome itself. This decision could be considered a faux pas on behalf of the Dome Management, since most gamers had already spent most of their money simply paying the entrance fee for the event. However, the food that was available inside the Dome was of a high quality [really, Ed], so the ban on external food was soon forgotten by most.



For those who attended the expo side of things, there was a literal bucket-load of shiny things to grab one's attention.

The Sony EyeToy managed to gather a lot of attention, often it was near impossible to move through the crowds ogling at the various people performing strange gyrations in front of the PS2. Sony's stand offered up the chance to



SBS Learnership

SBS learners from the Rivonia training centre were given the opportunity to help out with the networking and setting up of rAge and the LAN area. Many were impressed at the commitment and dedication the learners portrayed at the event and from the learners side all of them were astounded at the lessons they were taught in doing this. Some of the work they were given was tiresome and some of the work was fun, but all in all the learners really enjoyed partaking in the event. SITA Learnerships are designed to help the underprivileged into a career, in this case Information Technology, by giving them the necessary training to make them employable in the outside market.



count

This, is gaming. It is much bigger than most people know and it has something for everyone if you just give it a chance. It is an industry, a growing one in this country. Be there, as it expands and transforms into an even larger part of our daily lives.

play gems such as Jak 2: Renegade, the new and innovative Dog's Life, not to mention Time Crisis 3. On show at other stands were sleeper hits such as Prince of Persia: Sands of Time and the new WW2 title, Call of Duty. For some however, it was difficult to focus on the new range of playable titles. Various booth-babes wandered the scene, attracting as much attention as legally allowed, noticeably the PlayStation 2 'Silver' girls, whom later had to change their attire due to a few complaints about the 'skimpy' nature of their garb, much to the dismay of the male attendance.

Unfortunately, the show of force in terms of retailers was noticeably lacking from the event. The few stands that did retail their goods did so amiably.

Initial reports have shown very favourable numbers in relation to stock sold at the event. Stands such as Anime Direct (peddling the cheapest legal Anime DVDs this country has ever seen), Budget Technologies (intelligently priced games) and Outer Limits, proved that the market for such goods is perhaps much larger than anyone could have imagined.

Throughout the entire event, the constant showing of both new Anime (Japanese animation) titles and older, more classical titles managed to gather a large amount of interest. Often, the field of beanbags sponsored by MTN was packed with wide-eyed enthusiasts as well as the casual passer-by. The AMV (Anime Music Video) competition, where people could submit their own self-made music videos using clips from Anime, showed a lot of local talent, hopefully paving the way for future competitions. Security for the LAN area was incredibly tight, nothing went in or out without the approval of either the NAG staff or security, resulting in no reported theft from the BYOC area.

rAge is a difficult event to summarize concisely, due to it's multi-faceted nature. There was seemingly something for everyone, and then some.

Despite being the first in a hopefully long line of rAge events, it managed to capture the spirit of gaming and convey it to the masses in a language even they can understand.



Gamers Gate Winners

- Albatron Counter-Strike Invitational - DC Ignite (R10 000.00)
- WarCraft III Invitational - nf-sWoop (Trip to Korea)
- Halo: Combat Evolved - Kyle Nelson (AOpen PC)



Today Korea, Tomorrow the World

by anton lines



Each year at the World Cyber Games grand final event, we are reminded just how small our burgeoning community really is, and South Korea was again the perfect location to showcase what professional gaming has become. Many have argued that gaming is not a sport and can never be one, but with the level of popularity it has managed to reach, players and spectators will be thinking to themselves, "If it's not a sport, who cares?"

Whatever competitive gaming is eventually classified as, it has caught the world's attention. People in high places are starting to take notice. South Korea's president delivered a pre-recorded video speech at the WCG opening ceremony (I for one would vote for him), and the mayor of Seoul not only spoke in person but also played a game of StarCraft against the tournament winner (to the absolute delight of the crowd who cheered ardently for each structure and unit he built). The CEO of Samsung was, of course, also present at the opening and closing ceremonies, first welcoming and then wishing the competitors farewell.

The event itself was held at the Seoul Olympic Park, making perfect use of the infrastructure from the 1988 Olympic Games (which is still something of immense pride for the Korean people). There were three main arenas set inside the Olympic gymnasiums - the World Arena, where the tournament games were played; the Games Arena, being the setting for the stage matches; and the Cyber Arena, which was the presentation area and also where some of the exhibition games were held. All six hundred players were accommodated in the Olympic Parktel, a very comfortable hotel with excellent buffet catering. There were two practice rooms for warming up, although the PCs provided weren't quite enough to allow everyone a reasonable amount of practice time. Other venues included the World Peace Gate, where the opening ceremony was held; and the middle of the park, where a stage was constructed for the Game Music Festival (featuring well-known Korean



vocalists and a full symphony orchestra). A technology showcase was held outside the tournament area, and on other small stages around the park there were displays of modern Korean culture (break dancing, costume play and contemporary traditional music).

For the first time since the WCG's inception, the host country did not walk away with the highest number of medals. This year it went to Germany, mainly because of their dominance over the FIFA 2003 scene (first and second place in the individual competition, first place in the Nations Versus Nations tournament). In the previous two years, the overall winner was South Korea, which is hardly surprising. When it comes to online capability, Korea is the first world of first world countries, having the highest ratio of broadband users on the planet. Not only that, but they have several professional gaming leagues in place, gaming cafés practically on every street, and a gaming television network. If that isn't enough, the third most popular "sport" in the country is StarCraft. The best players are literally treated as celebrities.

How can South Africa rise to this sort of level? This was the question asked, not just about us, but also about many of the other developing nations. During the stay in Seoul, I had the pleasure of attending the 2003 WCG Conference, where strategic partners from all 55 participating countries shared ideas and business strategies in order to grow gaming worldwide. The Netherlands (fourth in medal standings), explained how they held their WCG qualifiers on national television. Produced in a studio, with an audience and a professional camera team, the segment featured the players who had made it to the final rounds of the qualifiers. The most exciting moments, including in-game footage and commentary, were compiled and professionally edited to show to the public. Other countries held their qualifiers in conjunction with rock or pop concerts and culture festivals in an effort to attract more spectators. However, the most amazing statistic delivered at the conference was the high level of government support that quite a few nations enjoy. In Russia, nearly forty preliminary events were held in order to determine their WCG representatives, and these events were subsidised to a degree by the state. The South Korean government, not to be outdone, sponsored the inclusion of an entire game in the WCG tournament: the locally-made "Survival Project".

Unfortunately, it would be unrealistic to expect government support in South Africa at this moment in time. Gaming here is not a popular pastime like it is in the first world. Most of our population cannot afford computers at all, let alone machines capable of running the latest competitive titles. This ties in with the another reason - South African gaming is currently not representative of every race group. The way forward, as I and many others have believed for a long time, lies in introducing gaming at a school level. Even underprivileged schools are receiving government grants for computers. While the education department worries about their computer literacy, we are being provided with the groundwork for forming inter-school gaming leagues. This would both raise public interest in the sport and ensure that it is accessible to people of all colours and cultures. Perhaps then the government would take an interest in gaming, as other governments have abroad.

South Africa at the WCG



The South African team, consisting of Karl "Mburrr" Buys, Anthony "Juvenile" Fellowes, Warren "Dr4k" Medcalf, Clayton "Destroyer" Niewenhuizen, Riaan "Style" van Niekerk, Warren "Storm" Steven and Mark "Heat" Efstratiou, and managed by myself, Anton "The_Basilisk" Lines, spent nine unforgettable days in the city of Seoul.

Our achievements this year were unexpected and somewhat unconventional as everyone had decided not to worry about winning. Be that as it may, our players quickly became regarded as feared competitors, and were talked about frequently as the main underdogs of the tournament. Evolve showed this by winning two Counter-Strike matches (more than have ever been won before), drawing with New Zealand, and losing only by one crucial round to Russia. Mburrr won three out of his six group matches, including victories over the top Korean and Lithuanian players. Our local team for Dead Or Alive 3 (a fighting game for the Xbox) finished second in the Nations Versus Nations challenge - the first time South Africa has ever reached a final in any game. For this achievement, Heat, Style, Mburrr and I each walked away with a Sound Blaster Audigy 2 and important bragging rights over the Americans who were staying next to us in the hotel (and only made top 8).

Most of the days, however, we had no tournament commitments due to our elimination in the individual group stages, and had the opportunity to see Seoul from the inside out. Making good use of the endlessly efficient subway system, we visited Techno Mart (where Heat and Style bought cheap Xboxes and I landed a Gameboy Advance SP for the equivalent of R900), the COEX mall (the Koreans are very reliant on brand name clothing, illustrated perfectly by a Quicksilver T-shirt going for over a thousand Rand), and the street markets of Dongdaemun and Yong Sang. The entire country, it seems, is run by four companies - Samsung, LG, SK and Hyundai - who have stakes in almost every industry. Imagine seeing an LG petrol station or a Hyundai department store. And be it a Hyundai, Kia or Daewoo, every car on the road looks new. You won't find beat-up taxis in this city, but you will find drivers who put any other nation to shame in terms of sheer speed.

There were games, there were parties, there were shopping sprees, there were hilarious examples of poorly-used English, and there were many schoolgirls. But the ultimate highlight of the trip was the discovery of a bar that sold Castle Lager. And as I'm sure you can imagine, much merriment was made.

lazy gamer's guide:

MP3s for the masses? Get a USB drive player. MP3s for the bourgeois? Get a Jukebox. MP3s for the money-burning elite? Well, hell, you want one of these...

Apple iPod

The dawn of man

The iPod is worth more than its price in gold (it weighs around 159 grams for R 5 149.00 if you take the 40GB model), so it comes in an impressive package that would make design students weep over their obvious lack of talent and efficiency. And it looks really, really cool. So cool, in fact, that it took NAG* the good part of 30 minutes to figure out how it works. It gave us teary-eyed flashbacks to those apes in the beginning of 2001: A Space Odyssey...

* [And when you say NAG you mean 'you' right, Ed]

Only in America

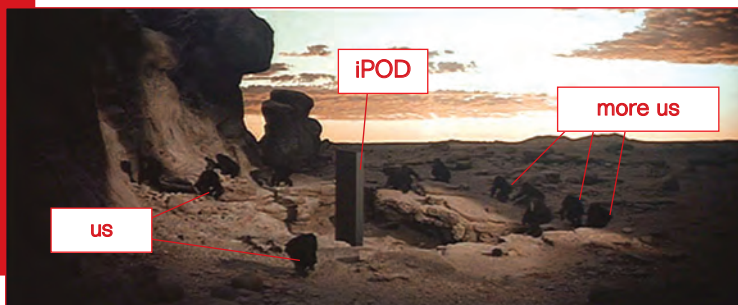
Apart from wacky laws and quirky presidents, those people across the pond and North of the equator also gain from the iPod because it supports the Apple music service. While you can download music and pay for it, it's all in dollars, which might work out quite expensive. Of course, if you can afford this puppy, who cares? The songs are stored on your PC, which you then transfer to the iPod. Yes, you can transfer your own stuff as well...

The Wheel in the Sky

You can control almost everything of the iPod via this circle on its front. Simply drag your finger in a direction to scroll up or down a menu, and tap the center of the circle to make a selection. In case you get lost, there is the useful Menu button to take you a step back up the menu hierarchy, and the play buttons make for easy control of your listening pleasure.

Power is cheap

The iPod has self-recharging batteries and the 20GB and 40GB uses a docking tray, similar to most PDA devices. These two models also ship with a hand-held remote for easy control of the play features. The docking tray also lets you run audio out to speakers or an amp of sorts, turning the iPod into an easy mobile music source. Considering you can fit 10,000 songs on the 40GB, that's a lot of music for a party.



Fire. Wire.

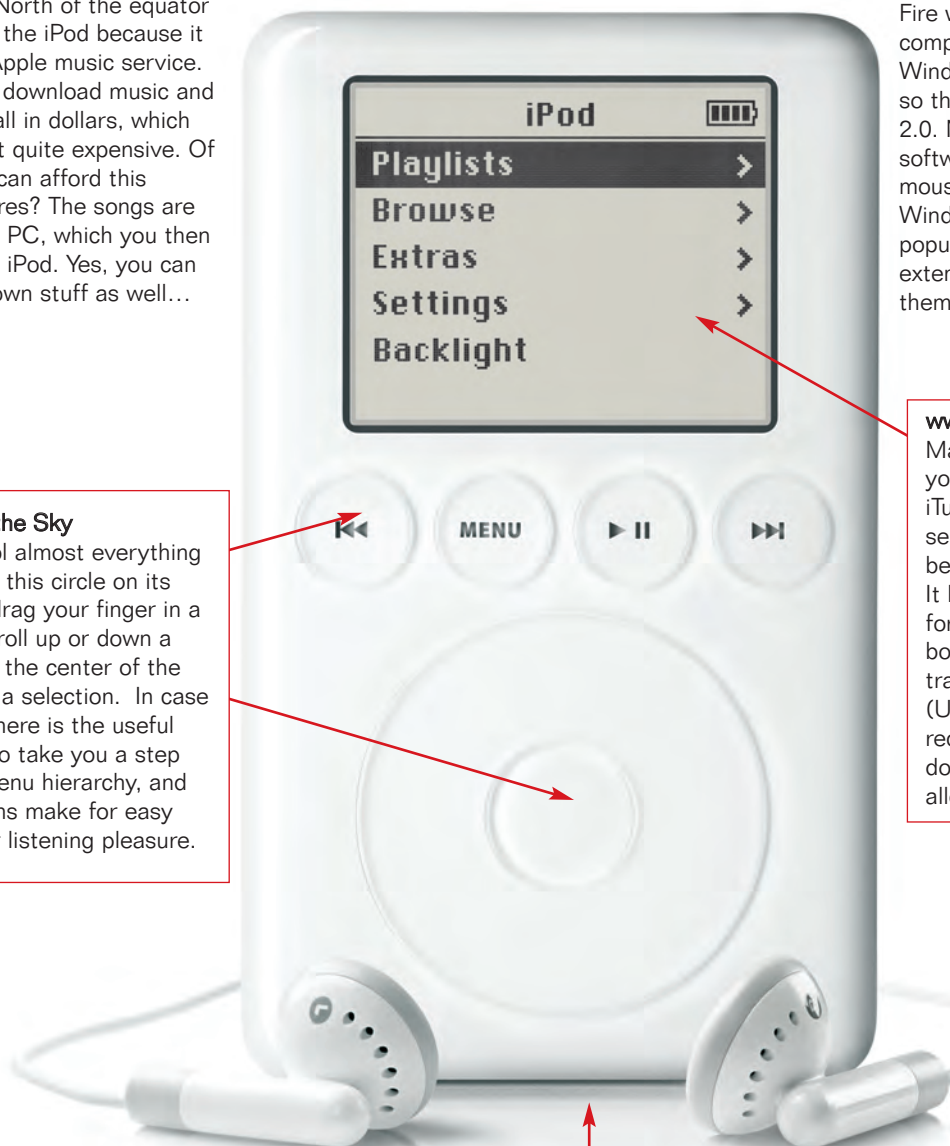
Yup, it's from Apple, so it supports Fire wire. After a while the company decided to let us Windows users have it a bit easier, so there's also support for USB 2.0. Mac users get to use iTunes, software that will make your one-mouse-button life that much easier. Windows users can use the more popular Musicmatch to sort their extensive libraries and transfer them onto the iPod.

www.apple.com/itunes

May this become the center of your universe if you buy an iPod. iTunes is Apple's online store to sell songs to you and has become a bit of a success story. It has recently become available for Windows users as well, and boasts to have over 400,000 tracks by end of October, at 99c (US) a piece, covering the 5 big record labels. You can also download novels and set up allowance accounts for kids.

Break the bank

The iPod isn't really that expensive. Consider what you pay for a standard 128 player and then do the math - it's a far cheaper player than most. But the 10GB will still set you back R 3 319.00, the 20GB is priced at R 4 139.00 and expect the 40GB to take R 5 149.00 of your hard-earned cash.



The best players rely on the Sennheiser Communications PC 150, one of five brand new Sennheiser PC headsets. Thanks to the ultra-comfortable headband, hour-long game playing and internet surfing on your PC will become a totally new, exciting experience. Its noise cancelling microphone, inline volume-control and the microphone mute function is sure to give you an added advantage. Sounds rough for the competition, right?

www.sennheiser.co.za
sales@sennheiser.co.za
Telephone: 011 482 2501

Game On

command & conquer

Command & Conquer: Tiberian Dawn 1995

Rating: ★★★★★



The original C&C game appeared to cause a revolution in the RTS gaming world, taking over from recently released WarCraft and continuing Westwood's RTS from Dune 2.

Command & Conquer: The Covert Operations 1996

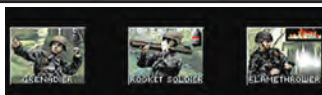
Rating: ★★★



Where the original game let you command large forces, Covert Operations had small squadrons doing important, but dangerous, missions. It was extremely tough, but filled a niche that existed after the original title.

Command & Conquer: Sole Survivor Online 1997

Rating: ★★



Strictly multi-player, Sole Survivor gave you command of a single unit, a battlefield full of upgrade crates, and up to 50 other players to fight against (a first for online play). The graphics were inferior to Red Alert's, but it was way ahead of its time.

Red Alert 1996

Rating: ★★★



Instead of just churning out a sequel, Westwood decided to expand the C&C world with an alternative scenario where Hitler never existed and the Cold War got really, really ugly. It immediately got a following amongst C&C fans, and boasted both a DOS and Windows version.

Red Alert - The Aftermath 1997

Rating: ★★★



This expansion was thought to be the last in the Red Alert series (which Red Alert 2 disproved). It was very thorough, introducing a host of new units such as the Chronotank and Demolition Truck.

Red Alert: Counterstrike 1997

Rating: ★★



16 new single player maps, over 100 multiplayer maps, new weapons and new vehicles added even more to the Red Alert legacy, but not much else.

Red Alert 2 2000

Rating: ★★★★★



The Russians have landed and they are out to take the US. The new title makes use of Tiberian Sun's new engine, but combined with that Red Alert goodness that a lot of C&C fans preferred.

Tiberian Sun 1999

Rating: ★★★



Perhaps a bit too over-hyped, Tiberian Sun did introduce a whole new chapter to the C&C universe, a new engine, new weapons and vehicles and a few new reasons to blow up the enemy.

Tiberian Sun: Firestorm 2000

Rating: ★★★★★



Kane might be dead, but CABAL, NOD's massive computer system, isn't and is out to conquer the world. This time the GDI faced a much nastier opponent in this expansion that added new units, new Tiberium creatures and new terrain, including Jungle settings.

Red Alert 2: Yuri's Revenge 2001

Rating: ★★★★★



The Cold War becomes a cerebral event when the Allied forces capture Russia, forcing the minister of Information, Yuri, to go into hiding and plot revenge, using an army of psychic troops. It was an unavoidable evolution for the series, and it introduced a few new concepts to the series, such as using three forces instead of just 2.

Command & Conquer: Renegade 2002

Rating: ★★★



Renegade was the series' first, and only, venture outside of its RTS mould as you took control of a commando as he fights the forces of Nod. The dated 3D engine and buggy interface was saved by the arcade-like feel of the action, as well as the multiplayer vehicles patch released much later.

Command & Conquer: Generals 2003

Rating: ★★★★★



Generals introduced full 3D graphics to the RTS series, as well as dumping the FMV sequences C&C was famous for. It starred 3 factions, unrelated to the original C&C series, and was a welcome breath back into the series.

Command & Conquer: Generals: Zero Hour 2003

Rating: ★★★



The inevitable expansion to Generals finally arrived and added new campaigns for all three sides plus a new Challenge mode which pits you against up to 9 different Generals.

*There is no emotion,
there is peace.*

*There is no ignorance,
there is knowledge.*

*There is no passion,
there is serenity.*

*There is no death, there
is only the Force.*

*Jedi seek to improve
themselves through
knowledge and training.*

*Jedi respect all life
in any form.*

*Fear leads to Anger.
Anger leads to Hate.*

*Hate leads to Power,
Power leads to Victory.*

*The dark side is
stronger than the light.*

*True Power is only achieved
through testing the limits
of ones Anger, AND*

PASSING through unscathed.

*your hatred
will make you Strong.*



STAR WARS®
KNIGHTS
OF THE
OLD REPUBLIC™
WWW.SWKOTOR.COM

CHOOSE YOUR PATH It is four thousand years before the Galactic Empire. Thousands of Jedi and Sith are fighting an epic battle between light and dark with you at the epicenter and the fate of the galaxy hanging in the balance. You can side with the light or succumb to the darkness—but in the end you must choose and let the galaxy suffer the consequences. **THE HIGHEST RANKING RPG OF THE YEAR IS NOW AVAILABLE ON PC.***

PC
CD-ROM
SOFTWARE

BiOWARE™
CORP

Official *Star Wars*® Web Site
www.starwars.com



LucasArts and the LucasArts logo are registered trademarks of Lucasfilm Ltd. BioWare and the BioWare logo are registered trademarks of BioWare Corp. © 2003 Lucasfilm Entertainment Company Ltd. or Lucasfilm Ltd. & © or TM as indicated. All rights reserved. Microsoft, Xbox and the Xbox Logos are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and / or in other countries and are used under license from Microsoft. *All scores based on Xbox version of the game according to Gamerankings.com on 9-05-03

The wonder product with 101 uses!

domain of the basilisk:

So you want to be an... FPS Player?

FPS, or First Person Shooter, is the genre of games where you assume the role of a combatant in a realistic or fantastic environment. Using a crosshair in the centre of your screen to aim, you generally try to kill anything that isn't you. Of course, sometimes you have team-mates, sometimes you have objectives to complete instead, and sometimes it's better to just run away, but fragging (killing opponents) is the general nature of the game. Over the years, I have gathered experience playing all types of FPS games, competitively and casually, team-based and one-versus-one, and I've learned, along with my colleagues and opponents, common elements to playing them all successfully.

Part 1 - The Importance of Setup

One of the most basic principles of FPS play is how you set up your game. This is such a large factor that clans like Shroet Kommando (<http://www.schroet.de>) make money by allowing only "SK Insiders" to download their config files. Now, copying a well-known player's setup is all well and good,

"r_picmip 3" (or a value up to 5), which blends the textures, simplifying the graphics even further. Check your settings in windows; make sure anti-aliasing and anisotropic filtering are both off. Sometimes you will need to edit your config file manually to turn off certain settings. For this, either download a tutorial, or ask one

of the better players in the community to show you how. If you're still getting terrible frame rates, it doesn't mean you should stop playing, only that you're going to have to work harder to be competitive. I have been playing UT2003 in 320x240 resolution, on lowest everything, getting 20fps, for the entire year.

Resolution does not affect frame rate much, so it is more a matter of what you are comfortable with. The most common "professional" resolutions are 640x480 and 800x600 - going any higher

keep track of your opponent in close-quarter fights. Delayed projectile weapons (such as the rocket launcher) can be handled more effectively this way, but "point-and-click" accuracy will usually not be as high. A lower sensitivity allows for better use of hitscan (the railgun and all Counter-Strike weapons for example) and tracking weapons (the Quake 3 lightning gun and the UT2003 minigun). A lower sensitivity forces you to be more aware and puts more emphasis on prediction. However, you run the risk of losing track of your opponent when he comes close, and you are at a horrible disadvantage if you run into him by accident. A way to combat this is to use mouse acceleration, which takes some getting used to. This allows you to turn around faster, but still keep a low sensitivity when aiming over short distances on the mouse pad. Most professional players use a low sensitivity with a mouse acceleration of around 2, but there are several (such as ZeRo4, winner of WCG 2001 in Quake 3) whose sensitivities are high. To start out with, I would recommend you keep it low until your natural aim reaches a competent level, then increase it to medium or add acceleration.

Finally, do you play with your mouse inverted, or not? I find that for games such as Counter-Strike, where the game is mostly 2D based (only point-and-click), it is better to have your mouse standard (i.e., not inverted). This means your arm / wrist move in the same direction as your crosshair, and thus you dedicate less brainpower to aiming. But where movement is a big part of the game and you require a perception of 3D space, sometimes inverting the mouse can be an advantage since it forces your mind to think that way. In the end, this does not matter as long as you are comfortable with the game handling. Keep your settings consistent before a tournament or important match - being familiar with them is what counts most.

In part 2, next month, I will be looking at FOV (field of vision) and the importance of correctly binding your keys. Once that is out of the way, we can tackle the more advanced points of playing the game.



but not everyone feels comfortable on the same settings. I do recommend getting hold of your favourite player's config, you will most likely learn a trick or two. But use it as a guideline - take only the pieces that you feel are useful, it is always a better idea to configure the majority of your settings yourself. In the following paragraphs, I will explain how to do this efficiently. First, the very basics. It goes without saying that you're going to need a PC capable of handling the game comfortably. A reasonable frame rate is 60fps (frames per second - ironically the same abbreviation as First Person Shooter). Do not be fooled into thinking that by running around the map alone, or even with bots somewhere in the vicinity, you are getting an accurate reading of your frame rate. 60fps can very quickly drop to 20fps in the midst of a skirmish, and what you get in a skirmish is the only number that counts. Look up the console command to display frames per second in your game and keep a close eye on it when the heat is on. (In UT2003 it is "stat fps", in Counter-Strike it is "cl_showfps 1", in Quake 3 and anything else that uses the Q3 engine, it is "cg_drawfps 1.") There are many things one can do to improve frame rate (other than upgrading) and this ties in with the advantages of lowering your detail settings. Casual gamers usually get very upset whenever this is mentioned, but if you're looking to improve, it is an important step. The rule of thumb is: the lower the settings, the better. Why? Aside from giving you more frames, it allows you to see your opponents more clearly. In Q3-based games, you can use the command

will not help. Refresh rate is another concern - ideally you should be running 100hz or more. Older monitors may only be able to do 60hz or 75hz, and if this is the case, make sure Vertical Sync is on in your windows and/or config settings to avoid pixel tearing (the "jumbling" of images on the screen when you move your mouse too quickly). This will limit your frame rate to that of your refresh rate, putting a stop to the tearing. And if you're thinking of buying a new monitor, 17" and 19" are the most suited to gaming.

Also on the topic of visual settings, correctly adjusting brightness, contrast and gamma is essential. The idea is to make the player model stand out from the background as much as possible, usually by making the scenery dark and the model bright. In UT2003, for example, try putting all three values at 1. (Certain games have an option for brightskins - use this if it is available).

The next, and most important aspects of setup are your controls. Mouse sensitivity is a much debated topic - is it better to have a high or low sensitivity? These days, sensitivity is measured in centimetres per 360 degrees. That is, how far you move your mouse to turn a full circle in the game. A "low" sensitivity is anything greater than 15cm per 360°. A "high" sensitivity is less than 10cm per 360°. Anything in-between is considered medium.

Having a higher sensitivity allows for a quicker reaction time and being able to





— Feel the Power of AMD64 Architecture —



K8V Deluxe

- AMD Athlon 64 Processor
- VIA K8T800+VT8237
- DDR400
- Scalable HyperTransport
- Dual SATA RAID
- IEEE1394
- ASUS AI Features
- 3COM Gigabit LAN
- ASUS WiFi slot



SK8V

- AMD Athlon 64 FX & Opteron 100 Series
- VIA K8T800+VT8237
- Dual Channel DDR400
- Scalable HyperTransport
- Dual SATA RAID
- IEEE1394
- ASUS AI Features
- 3COM Gigabit LAN
- ASUS WiFi slot



SK8N

- AMD Athlon 64 FX & Opteron 100 Series
- NVIDIA nForce3 Pro150
- Dual Channel DDR400
- Scalable HyperTransport
- IEEE1394
- ASUS AI Features
- SATA RAID



Sahara
Johannesburg Tel: (+27 11) 542-1000
Port Elizabeth Tel: (+27 41) 365-2911
Cape Town Tel: (+27 21) 551-5595
Durban Tel: (+27 31) 263-1885
<http://www.sahara.co.za>



COREX IT Distribution Dynamics
Tel: 27-11 7075000
Fax: 27-11 7075050
<http://www.corex.co.za>



ASUS South Africa
Office Tel: +27 11 781 4204
General email: jack_chen@asus.com.tw
Technical email: david_hsliao@asus.com.tw
www.asus.com

medal of honour

pacific assault

There are more World War 2 shooters on the market than you can shake a Tiger Tank at, but very few look at the Pacific conflict.

Medal of Honor: Pacific Assault, though, places you in the boots of a WWII soldier who must survive the devastating attack on Pearl Harbor and then join the Allied crusade to defeat Imperial Japan's bloody conquest of the Pacific.

We spoke with Dave Nash, Lead Game Designer, to find out more about what is going on behind the scenes.

Medal of Honor: Pacific Assault's release is a little way off so how many people are at present working on the game and have you created the full game design and in terms of time and PC technology are you aiming for a certain PC specification?

Well the team is hovering somewhere around 40 people at the present time, but is gradually growing. In the end, I wouldn't be surprised if twice as many people have a hand in its creation. The game's design has been mostly finalized for quite some time now, but things continue to change and evolve as we come up with new ideas and find new/better ways of implementing features. The final minimum specification hasn't been announced yet, but I'd imagine that it will fall somewhere in the neighbourhood of a 1 GHz processor with a GeForce 2 or better.

What facets from previous games are you focusing on and, apart from differing settings, what do you hope will be the main outstanding qualities of this title?

The MOH titles tend to be evolutionary, but in this case we're making so many improvements and changes that I think we may be able to tack an 'r' to the front of that word. Many things

will still feel the same - we're still a first-person shooter, we're still putting the player through someone's experience of WWII, we're still going to have a great play dynamic interspersed with grand cinematic experiences... but much will change as well. One of the big things we want to do is to represent things changing over time. The shell will change over time, as your 'barracks' become more and more worn. The player and his buddies will change over time, becoming more tanned and battle-weary.

The Japanese had their own set of rules and traits when it came to war, so what are the most apparent and obvious to the player when facing them?

We've done tons of research and I could spend a few paragraphs talking about that, but instead let me answer the question - there are a couple of the Japanese traits and tactics that we are going to simulate. For one, the Japanese squad leaders and commanders were always at the front - they saw this as a sign of leadership and encouragement for the troops. Often, these leaders would be killed, and when this occurred, those that were under them would often just banzai charge and go out in a blaze of glory. This is a working AI trait that we have already implemented into the game. The Japanese were also known for being very sneaky - always finding hiding places, crawling around on their bellies, etc.

What makes the Pacific Theatre of Operations from 1941-1944 interesting? How about a few events from this period that will captivate gamers?

Well, entire books can be (and have been) written covering this topic. The battles in the Pacific were incredibly fierce. They were often more intense than in the European Theatre, in that they often happened in such confined spaces (tiny islands and atolls). For us, some of what makes the PTO so

different and exciting is the terrain itself. Instead of bombed out cities, the player will mostly be traversing thick jungle terrain. He'll have to stay alert, as attacks will come from anywhere at any time. Because of this, he'll really have to take his time moving through the levels - if he tries to tear through them Rambo-style, the player probably won't make it very far.

What authentic weapons of the time are on offer?

I don't believe our final weapon list has been released, but rest assured that they're both accurate from the time period while at the same time being different from what has been in the previous MoH PC titles.

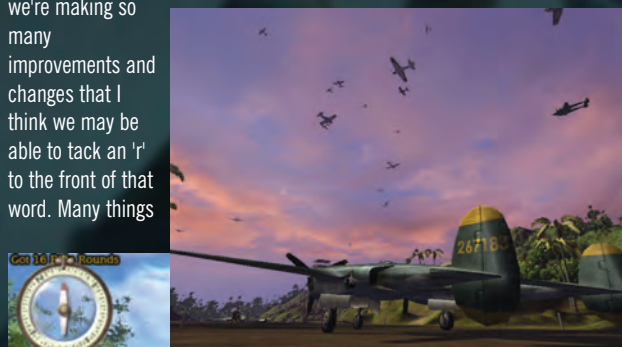
We heard rumours of multiple paths in the game...

Hmm, not sure where this information has come from, but the game on the whole will be a linear experience. Now we will have what I call mini-branches here and there in the level, where the player will be able to make decisions as to which way to go or how he should go about accomplishing a specific task. But MoH: PA isn't by any means trying to be a wide-open non-linear game, mainly for focus. We feel we can deliver a stronger, high-impact experience by making a mostly linear game. That said, there will be plenty of things built in that do offer the player re-playability, such as tasks that you can optionally complete which affect later levels, as well as the fact that all of the enemy AI will react to encounters very differently depending on what happens in them, so two people playing the same battle will often come away with a very different experience.

What vehicles will you be able to control?

Ah, a nice short answer. Undetermined!

"The player and his buddies will change over time, becoming more tanned and battle-weary"





Employee #69
Ivana

One of webonline's
support team members.

And she can't wait
to help you!

Experience the better Linux & Windows
hosting solution?

www.webonline.biz
sales@webonline.biz
0861 666 555



webonline
YOUR BETTER HOSTING SOLUTION

The fine print:

dial-ups are only available to hosted clients. free domain registration is subject to hosting with webonline. e&oe.
all services are subject to terms and conditions.

ps2 preview:

the suffering

▶ When you manage to break free the night before your execution on death row, you must be one lucky guy. Unless, of course, it happens to be due to apparitions and monsters swarming the prison in Midway's upcoming Survival Horror title...

The Suffering will be classified as a mature offering, which presents a chilling look into a penitentiary invaded by executed prisoners grotesquely reincarnated as the methods of execution that befell them. As well as plenty of blood and gore, a rich storyline, detailed locales and a variety of cast the game plans to offer many surprise and suspense elements akin to the genre. "The team was inspired primarily by the idea to take a serious horror setting, as exemplified by films like The Shining, and transpose it to an immersive game experience which puts the player in control of their destiny, something we haven't really seen in a horror game to date. We took classic shooters like Half-Life and Halo as particular points of inspiration," said the game's producer, Jeremy Airet. "The Suffering is extremely mature, not in a pornographic way, but in the way it realistically depicts a prison environment. Inmates and Correction Officers in penitentiaries are known for their colourful language, not to mention the horrific acts that got the prisoners incarcerated and the horrific acts that continue to take place inside the prison. We thought the game would ring false if we didn't include that in all its disturbing glory." The entire game takes place on Carnate Island over one particularly horrific night. Fortunately Carnate is quite a bit bigger than, say, Alcatraz, and gives the game 9 large levels, according to Airet: "For example there's an old Victorian mansion that was converted into an Asylum around the turn of the century. There's an old rock quarry out of which the prison was built. There are extensive wooded sections that connect up to a beach with a shipwreck on it. And of course there's the prison itself, which includes cellblocks, basement sections, execution chambers, and yard areas, which are all quite varied." As Torque, the main character, players encounter a cast of uniquely hardened criminals, prison guards and

grotesque apparitions. Jailed for a murder he may or may not have committed, Torque is next in line for execution when apparitions besiege the prison and inadvertently free him. In the game, players can transform Torque into his monstrous alter ego and unleash the power of his primal fury while battling 12 horrific creatures, or alternatively he can use the 10 weapons that become available through the course of the game. Depending on how they play the game, players will arrive at three distinct endings for a unique gaming experience.

Playing the game is all about pacing, alternating the visceral combat with the moody exploration passages, and the compelling puzzle sections. Just like a film, you can't scare the player every second of the experience or they'll become desensitised.

Some of the creative forms on offer are certainly weird and different from the norm. Thankfully, none of the creatures you battle are really cannon fodder: from the very start the monsters are challenging, crafty combatants, horrific in their design and movements, courtesy of Stan Winston, the design guru with four academy awards behind his name for films such as Jurassic Park and Aliens.

"You can't imagine how you'll survive a fight with even one," says Airet, "Then, next thing you know, you have to fight three at once. Then that creature is surpassed on every level by a new one we introduce, and you have to fight them all at once."

With possibly 6 months before completion, The Suffering certainly appears to be one game with more than its share of great ideas and innovations. Both on the concept side, as well as technology, big strides forward are endeavouring to be made.



What's the similarity
between a fashion outlet,
a fast food restaurant
and a sports store?

nothing
except their hardware

When you consider the quality and reliability of Emerald PC's and servers, it's no surprise that we're one of the major suppliers to the nationwide retail trade.



EMERALD
.....brilliant thinking

LIQUID LAB

Manufactured and distributed by Light Edge Technology

Cape Town
021 510 8270

Durban
031 263 0121

Johannesburg
011 315 6680

Port Elizabeth
041 367 3062/5

ps2 preview:

Return to Game

alias

Based around the US TV series, *Alias* is an intriguing third-person action adventure game that allows players to step into the role of Sydney Bristow, an agent for the CIA. *Alias* will encompass all of the key elements behind the series' success, including high-action combat, stealth missions, time-based objectives, espionage, intriguing plot twists, high-tech weaponry and stunning locations that span the globe such as Romania, Brazil and Saudi Arabia, all based around a script by the writers of *Alias*.

It appears that on all counts, including some rather flashy screenshots, a very high standard is being met by the developers. Adding that extra bit of detail and attention can't fail to be noticed by the ever attentive gamer and Ana Louise Marsh, *Alias*' Lead Designer, was eager to elaborate: "A couple of examples to ensure full authenticity are the cloth and hair technology which we use to make Sydney much more life-like than your average game character, and the split screen rendering, where in certain parts of the game we show the action from two different camera angles at the same time." It does appear this is not a mere game license worked off of the back of a series that has done well, since the writers, actors and studio have been working closely with Acclaim to get things right. "We've managed to work very closely with the TV production team. They provided us with detailed photographs of the cast, blueprints of set designs and gadgets used in the show." Ana explained, "I also work with the show's costume designer to come up with the outfits for the game and the scriptwriters to construct the story."

The game design obviously reflects this approach. "We started off by taking inspiration from the TV show on the types of locations and situations that Sydney would go and created missions around them. We had to increase the number of

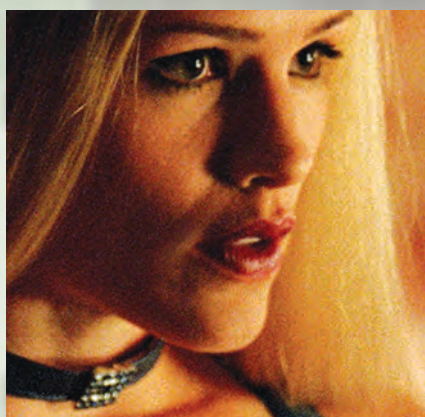
objectives and obstacles that Sydney encountered in each mission because the action sequences in the TV series can be quite short. We then started to work with the TV scriptwriters to make our designs work in the '*Alias*' universe."

A combination of the actors' voices as well as highly detailed models and animations are all part of the parcel to create an interactive replica of the show. We were informed by Ana that it's actually a bit spooky at the moment watching Sydney's eyes move and look at the non-player characters, as if she really knows what's going on around her. She's also a great martial artist and can use her cunning to outwit her enemies using disguises and stealth moves. The combat system has its repetitive moments, but the team plans to expand Sydney's action repertoire. At the moment fighting multiple opponents is easy enough with simple taps of the controller buttons to execute amazing-looking moves. This all should meld seamlessly with the various game styles, which include stealth missions.

As we mentioned, the game takes you across the globe to complete various objectives. The objectives in each mission have a definite solution to achieving them - there are however usually several ways to reach that solution. A small example is where the player has to get through a locked door, they might sneak up to it and use their lock pick quickly to get through it. Or they might hide in a dark corner and wait until they can stealthily attack a guard carrying the key. Or yet again, they might disarm a guard and shoot the lock off, risking alerting other guards with the sound of the gun.

Alias holds a lot of promise, including new features such as the split screen rendering (for example, you'll be able to pick a lock and look down a corridor at the same time) as well as bring more dimensions to such elements as multiple-opponent combat and using any

object as a weapon. While it has to fight the stigma of being the game of a show (often this translates to 'rubbish'), we see a lot of promise when Sydney hits the consoles next year.



Where would you find
the smartest pc's
in the country?

at
university
of course

If our PC's and servers didn't meet the highest quality criteria, we wouldn't be one of the biggest suppliers to universities in the Western Cape. But they do, and we are.



EMERALD
.....brilliant thinking

LIQUID LAB

Manufactured and distributed by Light Edge Technology

Cape Town
021 510 8270

Durban
031 263 0121

Johannesburg
011 315 6680

Port Elizabeth
041 367 3062/5

pc preview:

codename: panzers

Codename: Panzers is a 3D tactical combat that fuses RTS (real-time strategy) and RPG (role-playing game) elements where massive tanks are a crucial element set in World War II. Russian, German and Allied troops fight in three campaigns and more than 30 single player missions are on offer. Over a hundred authentic 3D vehicles are at the player's disposal as well as a wide range of ground troops. We spoke with Tamas Szeremy, MD at Storm Region, to get a fuller briefing on what Codename: Panzers offers.

"The programming team has created an excellent and smooth 3D engine and has done a lot of research but it is far from over. We've got a bookcase full of WWII volumes covering every subject we need and more than a hundred modelling magazines but the Internet is our largest source of information, where you can find full and detailed battle descriptions, veterans' stories, data on vehicles and pictures of uniforms." One of the more interesting features of the game are the strategic possibilities, such as occupying enemy tanks, entering strongholds and buildings and, more importantly, being able to hear the noise of tank engines and tracks or weapon fire

which plays an integral part in your possible success. Atmosphere, story and play dynamic are the three focused areas for the team. Tamas summarised: "By accomplishing objectives you receive prestige that can be spent on acquiring newly developed tanks, self-propelled guns and infantry with the latest weapons. Every good deed is rewarded, including freeing civilians from houses kept by the enemy. A realistic damage model, revolutionary experiencing system, easy and obvious unit and camera control make the game even more enjoyable. The atmosphere is guaranteed by high polygon objects with detailed textures, authentic vehicles, airplanes and infantry uniforms and amazing visual effects, like explosions, fire, smoke, real time self-shadow. In addition to the graphics, impressive sound effects will help you enter into the spirit of the battle.

"There are ten types of squads consisting of varying numbers of troops with different weapons. You have

every kind of vehicle you might need on the ground and in the air. Besides the most important and famous tanks and self-propelled guns you will have all the vehicles on all sides that played a role in the war. We are not including vehicles that were manufactured in small numbers except some really interesting developments that you will see when fighting against the Germans: V1-V2 rocket, Dora - a huge railway cannon and the Natter (Viper) rocket propelled airplane."

To add to the points Tamas made, the soldiers can see much farther than tanks so you have to use them as the eyes of the tanks. They can also hear which means a half-track or tank symbol appears where they heard it. This hearing range is reduced by the noise of rain. You can give the soldiers equipment like magnetic AT-mine, inflatable boat, hand-grenade, tank mine, mine detector, etc. to make them versatile.

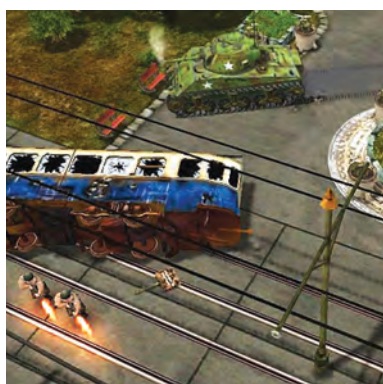
Getting the AI right and ensuring authentic and plausible interaction is being worked on as Tamas explained.

"You'll encounter Polish, French and Hungarian armies and Yugoslavian partisans. French partisans will help on the western front. In our previous game, SWINE, the units with different experience levels had different unit AI that proved to be not the best idea. The player couldn't really know what to expect from an advancing enemy. Technological development of weapons, quantity of weapons and soldiers and the quality of the soldiers determine the strength of an army. This is altered by several factors like the terrain."

Getting into the game should be painless and intuitive, and familiarising with the game is not over with the three tutorials, as the first missions of the campaigns are easy. In these missions you practice fighting with

infantry only then later with the different kind of vehicles and off-screen fire support. "Our intention was to balance infantry and vehicles so that they are equally important in the game. No more disposable infantry, actually they are very important since it is the crew not the tank who learns. On the other hand infantry is far from enough to stop a combined attack. Armoured transport vehicles increase their mobility and defence, artillery and bombers increase their range of fire and damage, recon planes extend their sight and tanks help them to break the enemy line."

It does appear that Storm Region is extending the boundaries of war gaming with some very clever touches without being too progressive. Let's hope they achieve their objectives!



What happens next?

- Fall to your doom
- Hacked to death by guards
- Control time and live to fight another day*

PRINCE OF PERSIA THE SANDS OF TIME™



*Control time. It's the ultimate power. But use it wisely. Rewind time to escape death. Freeze time and your enemies during combat. Look ahead of time to plan future moves. We'd all take more risks if we could control time.

www.prince-of-persia.com

PC CD-ROM



UBISOFT™

megarom
interactive

PROUDLY DISTRIBUTED BY MEGAROM INTERACTIVE (PTY) LTD.
011 234 2680 | SALES@MEGAROM.CO.ZA | WWW.MEGAROM.CO.ZA

pc preview:

▶ **Lucas Kane goes into a diner one night in New York. In a state of trance, he takes a knife, goes into the toilets and stabs the first person he meets. Making this a ritual murder - he has unexplained visions. After the murder, he becomes himself again but his life has completely changed. He is now a murderer. He will have to escape the police and try to understand what happened that night...**

For Fahrenheit, Nomad Soul developer Quantic Dream's 40-strong project team introduced new techniques for integrating motion captured animation within the real time 3D environment, and created a new style of interface for managing interactivity and a new conceptual framework for interactive storytelling. Each episode is a game by itself and you can start with any of them, but if you really want to enjoy the experience, it is better to play them all (like a real TV series). The inspiration for the game has come from many directions, including David Fincher movies, Dark City, Twin Peaks and even cult-noir series Millennium. The balance in Fahrenheit is exactly the same as in a real TV series. You can interact with your environment and talk to people, there are also some puzzles and action

sequences. Quantic is trying to give players a new type of experience by blurring the frontiers between genres. Setting the game in 2005 gives a good balance between what is happening now with a little license to invent and although New York is the focus it is a balance of the old and mystical side of the city and a good deal of detailed research has gone into it. Fahrenheit is full of dead ends and the characters have lots of depth and background. The intention is to use them a lot to tell parallel stories. Some of them will be linked to the main plot - others will just be red herrings.



Each episode of Fahrenheit will end with a cliff-hanger. A character will be left in a tricky position at the end of the sequence so you ask, what will happen in the next episode? The bottom line is to surprise players with some unexpected situations...

The hope is that Fahrenheit will draw in gamers by its graphic quality and the originality of its game play mechanics, but also that people who are not used to playing games will also enjoy it. Fahrenheit tries to be compelling for everybody, whether you've played games before or not.



developer: starbreeze [] publisher: TDK mediactive [] distributor: tba
release date: q1 2004 [] genre: action [] internet: www.tdk-mediactive.com
platforms: pc | ps2 | xbox | gcn

writer: Derek de la Fuente

pc preview:

▶ **Knights of the Temple is currently scheduled to be released for GameCube, PC, PlayStation2 and Xbox by Scandinavian Starbreeze Studios, the dev team creating this title, best known for Enclave.**

The player will assume the role of Paul de Raque, Knight of the Temple, as you set out on a holy crusade across a forbidding, medieval Europe to join your order in the Holy Land. Armed with your sword, axe, bow and shield, you must fight with all your strength to complete your journey. The core of the game is medieval style fighting with the classical weapons of European knights, coupled with detailed graphics of the historical milieus of the 12th century crusades. There are two states

of consciousness in the game. One is the real world in which actual travel is shown and the other is the dream world. The player accesses the supernatural levels when he gets wounded or is in any other way harmed. He will fall into a coma and experience his own nightmares in which he has to fight through a demon world. If he survives, he will be rewarded with tips and hints on how to proceed in the real world. With a number of facets - story and presentation - covered and conceptualised with the help of a Hollywood

script writer it was the important aspect of the game's technology that was investigated. The engine renders landscapes in the game world beautifully and the team motion captured the characters with the help of people who worked on Matrix Reloaded and Matrix Revolutions. With fighting being the main focus, the need to have plenty of variety is essential. At the beginning the character is not that experienced and only knows a few fighting moves and also only has a small, old sword. Progressing in the game he learns more fighting moves

and he will find new weapons. It will be interesting and essential to learn new moves and learn how to use new weapons. The game allows fighting against multiple enemies and does not stick to pure one on one fights. Already Knights of the Temple is looking a noteworthy title, with well-designed and detailed levels and a variety of challenges. It is all about ensuring continuity of interest throughout a game with ongoing surprises and challenges to keep the player hooked.



Get a free scratch card
with every movie ticket you buy from



Hot scratch

6 Daihatsu Charades
and thousands
of other prizes!



fasheezy!

PLUS if you sms keyword Game and your name to 082 003 0352 you stand a chance to win a hamper worth R10 000... You always win with Ster-Kinekor!

For movie info or to book call 082 16789 or go to the new-look www.sterkinetor.com

BONDIBLU[®]
EUROPE - AUSTRALIA - AFRICA



smarties

Calvey NUTTIES

Tiger
WheelTyr

BIG BOY
SCISSORS

SLUSH
PUDDING

SANYO



Coca-Cola

Aquafresh



MOBILE
SOLUTIONS

MASTER
CARD

Kodak

PlayStation 2

pc review:

NOW AVAILABLE



call of duty

"A hero is no braver than an ordinary man, but he is braver five minutes longer."

--Ralph Waldo Emerson.

I'm a self-confessed FPS junkie, but my obsession is often misinterpreted as a love for multiplayer shooters, something I rarely play. Give me any first-person game with a campaign backing it, and I'm hooked. World War 2 games have recently had a huge upsurge in popularity, and shooters are right there with them - the arcade-like Return to Castle Wolfenstein, the commendable Medal of Honor series (though that's had its ups and downs) and even the likes of Battlefield, which is essentially multiplayer wrapped into single-player mode. And most recently Call of Duty, by a team that left MoH development house 1080.

Call of Duty is spread over three campaigns - American, British and Russian, a popular trend with WW2 games. You start as a Yank paratrooper, jumping into occupied France as part of the D-Day invasion force. Here you are tasked with such duties as capturing towns and taking out flak positions. The next campaign sees you as a British SAS soldier. Your missions are slightly more covert - rescuing prisoners of war and sabotaging enemy ships. Then, lastly, you enter the game as a Russian grunt, sent into the battle

under threat of death (deserters, i.e. anyone who runs back, are shot), where things are as simple as just trying to survive.

The game finishes with three individual missions for each side, the last being the Russians storming the German seat of Power in Berlin. Each campaign is split into several stages, and each stage has several objectives that change as you move. These range from search-and-destroy to occupying areas to simply clearing out the enemy.

Everything in the game is squad based, though there are periods when you find yourself alone. But most of

the time you'll be surrounded by fellow soldiers. Sometimes they are the elite

SAS troopers storming a Nazi mansion, and sometimes they are your Russian brothers desperately running for cover and trying to find a weapon on the ground. The three campaigns are distinctly different, but they feel the same as in you are not alienated when you start them (important, since they follow up on each other - you can't select them individually). It's quite simple - you have to shoot the bad guys, the difference being in your

approach and weaponry. The Americans tend to have a

lot of automatic firepower, while the English are more conservative on ammo, balanced with more accurate weapons (being covert ops, after all). Russian missions are accented by a mixture of chaos and sniper fire - even if you hate sniping in a game, you'll quickly become a proverbial Eagle Eye in the snow.



Gentlemen, we've fought a whole bunch of these, so I know you know what to do. But indulge me. Move quickly, cover your buddies, don't bunch up - and for heavens' sake don't stop 'till we reach those bunkers.

8 | 184

▲ Your squad is your lifeline in tight situations



The Nazis come in various uniforms, depending on the area you play in and their rank. Some uniforms look a lot like your fellow combatants.

While your compass is really useful when you need to know what to do, most of the time you'll be too busy dodging bullets to give it much thought.

Tanks are a serious problem, and taking them out often makes up a nasty part of a mission. Forget grenades and such things. You'll need anti-tank rockets or something heavier...

Every mission is with your own squad, who do their best to stay alive. But some do fall in battle, and you get joined by new members through the game.

You have two main weapon slots, a pistol slot and one for grenades. You can grab any weapon you find in the field, but carrying two types of rifles won't help much in a firefight.

Health can disappear like mist in front of the sun, depending on your game difficulty. And head shots count on you too.

These changes are further accented with mobile missions. In a particular American mission you ride shotgun in a beaten up car, leaning out of the window and firing at Germans, while the English have you on the back of a truck, shooting rockets at bikes and trucks giving chase. Should I mention the Russian Tank mission?

Both your squad and the AI have a self-adjusting AI powering them. This is combined with scripted events in the game. Enemy units won't appear before they should, but once they are alerted to your presence, their


reactions are quite unpredictable. It's a gamble whether, when you throw a grenade, a soldier would run, dive for cover, throw it back or simply stare at it. Your squad reacts in the same way - sometimes giving cover fire, and sometimes expecting it from you. Every time I reload a scene after dying, things are just slightly different. The guy on my left might not throw a grenade. The German Sniper might be just a bit more accurate. Someone might man a machine-gun nest...

This all creates a very intense game, especially at the toughest difficulty. The game isn't impossible to play, but

you'll often storm off in frustration and anger, only to return in a few minutes and try again. Call of Duty takes a leaf here from the console market by auto-saving the game as you progress (similar to MoH and Red Faction). Thus, when you die, you don't start at the beginning of the level, but instead near to when you last died. You can quick-save as well - a small mercy for some nearly - impossible missions.

There is a multiplayer mode, sans bots. Whether that will stand up against the likes of Battlefield and Day of

Defeat is a question of time, but players of the latter will be quite at home, thanks to both games using the Quake 3 engine (and just a few months ago I was proclaiming Elite Force II as the last game to use this aged engine!). Call of Duty isn't drop dead gorgeous, but it's very stunning - far more than any of its competitors. There are a few niggles in the code, such as overly accurate enemy units and the game sometimes forgets to auto-save. I also found the missions became shorter and more intense as the game progressed, but you can only take so much. Overall, Call of Duty shouldn't take you too long to complete, but it's a massive ride and worth every second.



all games reviewed on rection machines

Minimum Specification	
Pentium III 700 MHz 128 MB RAM 8 x CD ROM 32 MB D3D Video Accelerator 1.4 GB HDD	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intense action Diverse campaigns Best in the genre yet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some minor bugs Can be really tough

Summary

This is hands-down one of the best games of the year and one of the most enjoyable FPS titles made. It takes everything done before it by script-driven games and improves in nearly every aspect. If you love a good single-player shooter, you should own Call of Duty by now.

92



Explosions close to you render you temporarily deaf and stunned

pc review:

NOW AVAILABLE



There are those that will find fault in everything. These select few look down from their ideal world, a world that doesn't exist beyond the borders of their own minds, and pass judgement on everything. In reality if they truly believed everything they said there'd be nothing for them to do because nothing is worthy of their attention. It is these people who will say Max Payne 2 is too short, has a boring story and doesn't compare to the original. It's too short if you run and gun your way through the game and skip all the reading parts, the story is boring to those who only respond well to cartoon serials about mechanised robots taking over the world and it isn't as good as the original if your outlook on sequels is clouded by what is perceived as a sequel - more of the same, only better. Max Payne 2 is exactly that.

The game is described as a film noir love story. Noir is described as a genre of crime literature featuring tough, cynical characters and bleak settings. You'll struggle to find a better description of Max Payne, the game's central character and more so the events leading up to this game and beyond. His love interest is played by Mona Sax, a murder suspect and the unfolding 'love story' is interwoven around a much deeper plot that reaches



max payne 2: the fall of max payne

back into Max's own dreary past and players will discover that not all is as it seems.

The story can be a little complex as it dips into the past, alternating between then and now, but eventually it calms down to a pace most will find comfortable; it is important that you do pay attention as the story is a big part of what Max Payne is all about - treating this game as a mindless shooter is sacrilege. The story is told via three mediums, a pseudo-graphic novel featuring hand drawn images and speech bubbles, the game engine and a few in-game mechanisms such as answering machines and non-player character



▲ You team up with these heavies for a short while



▲ The lovely Mona Sax



▼ Max Payne 2 is a thing of beauty



conversations. All techniques work well together and considering the volume of material on offer this combined delivery method manages to convey the essence of the fiction without boring the player. You'll have a much better time with Max Payne 2 if you can suspend the urge to re-distribute lead and pay attention to what the game is trying to achieve. Thoughtfully, for those who missed the first game there is a 'Previously' option to catch up to date using a concise and accurate review of the events leading up to Max Payne 2.

Matrix Unloaded

For those of you who haven't played Max Payne, the game is an action shooter played from the third person perspective [above and slightly behind the main character] and is essentially built around a new play

concept called bullet time. Bullet time is a limited and timed resource that allows the player to slow down time while still being able to aim weapons normally allowing the quick targeting of multiple enemies. This effectively means that Max can burst into a room and bag three bad guys in the time it takes to nail one. This concept is slightly modified from the original game and there is also one further enhancement in that if Max takes out multiple enemies quickly the bullet time hourglass turns yellow - in this mode enemies are slow but Max's movements, speed and aiming remains normal [real time]. One other angle to bullet time is dodging while shooting - here, at the press of a key, Max can dive in any direction i.e. bursting through a door, in slow motion while still being able to aim in real-time.

From a game dynamic point of view, Max Payne is as realistic as it gets, purists will have to overlook bullet time in this regard [it is vaguely explained away by saying that Max has heightened awareness during gun battles and is therefore able to make impossibly unrealistic gunplay seem easy].

The developer, Remedy, has kept the game strictly honest and you'll find no enemies that are magically aware of your presence or endless bad guys, if you've cleared a room in Max Payne 2 it stays clear. In this game you'll find no ridiculously tough level end bosses or endless gloomy corridors, it's a real world where a head shot will kill the boss character as quickly as a henchman. The enemies also behave as realistically as you'd expect and will duck and dive to avoid your bullets, one flaw in their behaviour is that most enemy characters tend to lean towards the offensive and will invariably come after you allowing for easy bottlenecking in doorways and group grenade ambushing. The graphics and physics engines need praise for displaying one of the most realistically detailed environments in a computer game. Each separate location is not only completely different from the last but also features a high level of detail and crisp photo-realistic textures. Most boxes, planks and bottles can be shot

or moved around and this makes for interesting playing when an ammunition crate detonates near a pile of boxes.

Sound and music is another area that obviously saw enough attention from the developers and in terms of musical score Max Payne 2 is superb with a moving soundtrack that salutes the setting and some excellent explosions and gunshots sound effects - especially when under the influence of bullet time. In short this game is a work of art on every level.

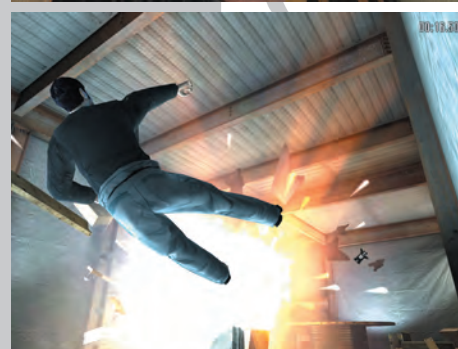
Close to perfect...

In terms of a sequel, Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne features a better bullet time play dynamic, more complex models and levels, and an excellent physics engine, players will also get to play Mona Sax and there are a few chapters where you'll be assisted by other game characters.

If you really look hard there are one or two minor issues with the game such as clipping problems, no multiplayer, it could have been a few chapters longer and the story is a little patchy if you don't concentrate. It's also only really suitable for adults thanks to the colourful thug and bad guy language format. But aside from these very minor snags, Max Payne 2 is easily the slickest big action title of the year and in this genre there is nothing else that comes close; an essential purchase if you like your action tough and gritty.



▲ You can play for ages with grenades, chairs and dead guys



all games reviewed on rection machines

Minimum Specification
Pentium 1 GHz | 256 MB RAM | 16 x CD ROM | 32 MB D3D Video Accelerator
1.7 GB HDD

☺ Sublime in every regard	☹ No multiplayer
☺ Production values	☹ Could have been longer
☺ Audio and visual	☹ Age restricted

Summary
There is nothing wrong with this game - in fact it could quite possibly be one of the best games of 2003. Rough action backed up by stunning locations, realistic environments, gritty sound effects and polished visuals make this a must buy for any action lover over 16.

90

ps2 review:



soul calibur 2

▶ "Transcending History and the World, A Tale of Souls and Swords Eternally Retold. Welcome to the New Stage of History."

Suffering and violence has swept Europe into an age of heroes and villains. Spurred on by the legacy of two cursed blades, warriors across the globe are gathering to claim the evil sword for themselves, the Soul Edge. Some seek the blade for salvation or freedom, others for power. For evil intentions, dark creatures from the nether would also wield the sword. In the centre of this maelstrom are some of the finest warriors who have ever lived,



but who will be able to stop the nightmare of destruction that burns throughout the land?

As far as stories go, Soul Calibur 2 follows the same convoluted concept as most fighting games do. To sum up, two swords exist including the Soul Edge. One of these swords has been demolished with its pieces scattered throughout the world. The Soul Edge still exists, and the characters in Soul Calibur 2 seek this mighty weapon for their own purposes, be it good or evil. Soul Calibur 2 is actually the third in the series, the first being Soul Edge, which was released into Japanese arcades in 1995. When Soul Edge was released in the United States in early 1997, Namco decided to rename the series to Soul Blade. It's sequel, Soul Calibur, was released into arcades in

1998 and was basically an updated version of Soul Blade with much improved graphics, new and improved characters and the inclusion of the 8 Way Run (a facet that 3D fighting games had been severely lacking until then).

Aside from the 8 Way Run (which allows you to move freely around the arena so as to attack from any angle), the fighting system in Soul Calibur 2 is relatively unique, in that it features weapon based fighting. The weapons can never be knocked from a character's hands or thrown. Some characters are able to change stances, meaning they can change from one fighting stance/style to another with the input of a couple of buttons. These fighting stances allow the character to perform special/different moves that the default/other fighting stances do not allow. This makes for some very interesting battles,

as a player who has a good grasp on the characters' fighting styles will greatly confuse his/her opponent. Some characters rely heavily on the use of stances/styles to be worthwhile in combat. A good example would be the character Nightmare. Wielding a disproportionately large, two-handed sword, Nightmare might seem a slow, cumbersome character to the uninitiated. However, once proper use of the stances is applied the sword can be swung continuously in wide arcs, picking up speed as it goes along making Nightmare a menacing and powerful opponent.

As was featured in Soul Calibur for the Sega Dreamcast, a large part of Soul Calibur 2 consists of the Weapon Master mode. In this section



▲ Each character has a series of different dance moves



of the game, you follow a very basic storyline from mission to mission completing objectives in combat (defeat the enemies in a certain amount of time, do not get hit during combat and so forth) to not only earn money which can be spent purchasing new weapons which affect aspects of your character such as the range of attacks and speed, but also to unlock new characters and features. Some of the features include high-resolution artwork, the ability to use the weapons collected in Weapon Master mode during VS (against a friend or computer opponent) combat or 'exhibition mode' which allows you to watch a character show a demonstration of his/her martial-art style (katas). There are over 200 weapons to purchase/unlock (10 per character, which can be used in the Extra modes), the addition of these weapons help spice things up as some possess certain powers. For example, some weapons can slowly regenerate your health, make you stronger, and help you to inflict more damage. These modifiers are definitely useful, but it is up to the player to decide just which weapon best suits his/her play style. The Weapon Master Mode might not appeal to everyone however, as often the objectives for a level seem contrived or entirely too difficult. None the less, the game's 15 instantly-playable characters (including the interesting newcomer, Necrid, designed by Todd McFarlane) can be complimented by a further 8, so one would have to look pretty hard to find another title that brings so much to the table and still manages to retain a sense of quality.

On the topic of quality, there is a lot of it to go around in the graphics department of Soul Calibur 2. Defying the trend of multi-platform releases, Soul Calibur 2 manages to keep a consistent and high-level of detail throughout all the platforms, these being PS2, GameCube and Xbox. Each character is incredibly detailed, hair and clothing flow in the wind, sparks fly when weapons collide. The battle arenas are just as bright and vivid as the characters, often offering expansive views beyond just the fighting area. Most of the arenas allow for Ring Outs (when a character is knocked/launched out of the arena), or are partially encased by walls, making Ring Outs much harder to achieve. Vibrant and beautiful, the graphics in Soul Calibur 2 (just like its predecessor) will be complimented years from now. To compliment the graphical quality, Namco composed intricate soundtracks, some of the best I have heard yet. Each

arena has its own theme song, each song unique and varied. As background music should, each track fits nicely with the theme of its level. Underground arenas flow with eerie, ominous songs whereas the light, outdoor environments receive the more upbeat tempo tunes. A good balance was achieved with the music; however the announcer could have been improved slightly as he seems just a little too



happy at times. An unnecessary yet welcome feature is the ability to set the language of the character voices from English to the original Japanese voices, for those puritans out there.

While there may be serious debates surrounding the balance issues with the three 'special' characters, Link, Spawn and Heihachi (all seemingly overpowered), Soul Calibur 2 remains a solid, faceted and fun gaming experience, bringing a quality title to all three of the major console contenders, so nobody has to miss out.

which is better?

In today's world of multi-platform releases, Soul Calibur 2 is no different. Appearing on Xbox, PlayStation 2 and the GameCube, if you happen to own more than one console you might find yourself wondering which version of the game you should buy. Thankfully, there is hardly any difference between the various versions aside from slight graphical quality and of course, the 'special' character. Xbox owners will be pleased to know that their version of Soul Calibur 2 has the highest graphical quality of all three consoles and features the trendy comic book hero, Spawn from Todd McFarlane Productions. PlayStation 2 owners will have to deal with a few slowdowns during certain levels and slightly longer loading times, but they'll have access to the highly popular Tekken character, Heihachi. The GameCube version sports slightly higher graphical quality than the PlayStation 2 version as well as shorter loading times (I've found) than both Xbox and PlayStation 2 versions, not to mention the loveable Nintendo character Link from the Zelda series. It all boils down to preference in the end, and which console you own/prefer.

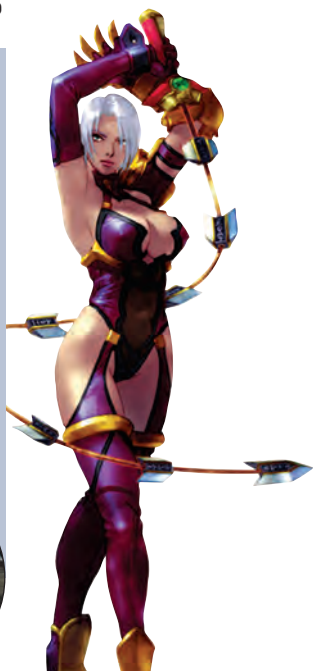
ps2



gamecube



xbox



Minimum Specification

1 - 2 players | 138kb memory | analog compatible | vibration compatible

- ⊕ Crisp, clear graphics
- ⊕ A lot of content
- ⊕ It's the sequel to Soul Calibur

- ⊗ Weapon Master Mode frustrating
- ⊗ Unbalanced 'special' characters

Summary

Rare in this world of lacklustre, below average games, Soul Calibur 2 manages to attain the level of detail and fun sorely missed from fighting titles. Tekken may have been the favoured series so far, but its light seems faded in the brilliance of Soul Calibur 2, which unlike its bigger brother, is available on all consoles.

80

pc review:

halo: combat evolved



There is a good deal of history leading up to the arrival of Halo: Combat Evolved on the PC, the kind of history that, in many ways, predetermines how a game will end up doing. In the beginning Halo (for the PC) was going to be the biggest FPS of all time, then the Xbox came along and stole 'borrowed' the game for a while. Now, 2 years later, it's finally on the PC but as a console port and developed by Gearbox Software.

If Halo is going to be remembered for anything it'll be for setting a new standard under the 'mixed bag' heading. Play the game for an hour or two and you'll be enthralled by the pace, the story, the compelling musical score, the

atmosphere and the variation of both play dynamic, enemy encounters and level design. Now, play a little further into the game and you'll discover somewhere in the middle an unpleasant pattern emerging - cut and paste level design. It is here that the game's true nature is revealed - repetitive and tiresome and all sadly as a result of lazy design. Here's an example in the form of a dramatic recreation, "after what seems like an eternity of ammunition draining fighting through an endless sea of spawning aliens that populate infinitely lengthy corridors and locations that all look identical you stop, exhausted, knowing you cannot continue and just as you feel your grip starting to slip it finally ends... you squeak a sigh of relief. It's the first time a game has

most but play the game long enough and you'll soon find yourself correctly predicting what the enemy will do next. Having said that, once you do figure out how your enemies will react they are replaced by a completely different enemy threat, one that rushes you in vast numbers instead of ducking and hiding behind wooden crates and bulkheads.

The multiplayer component of Halo is also top notch with endless game modes and some crafty level design - it's not going to start a revolution like Battlefield 1942 or Counter-Strike but it will certainly keep large groups of people entertained, especially considering the game is rather easy to get into. The bottom line on the multiplayer is that Halo is probably one of the better multiplayer experiences you're going to have this year and the only thing that'll keep it from attaining the following it deserves is lack of support at LANs and limited Internet play in South Africa.

[<http://games.saix.net> has a server up].

Halo: Combat Evolved is an engaging game with plenty of atmosphere and a story that uses the hook of a giant super weapon to keep you tuned in to the bitter end. It's probably one of the better games out there at the moment if you can overlook the higher than usual system requirements and depressingly repetitive level design and tiresome play dynamic that plagues the middle of the game. It's a good effort but not an excellent one.



▲ this is Halo...

almost completely crushed your will to play on another step. But that's okay, it's over." Dramatic recreation ends. Now just imagine how your will to go on is completely shattered when you realise you must do it all again - only this time retracing your steps back through the exact same areas. This single factor is the fun-crippling choice the developer made in what can only be a cheap tactic to falsely increase the length of the game and an increase in length at the expense of the player's entertainment is never a smart move. But hey, at least you'll get your moneys worth in terms of game time.

But enough about the bad

Despite the few but critically poor choices the developer made in terms of level design the game does much good in other areas and manages to make a few changes to generally accepted FPS conventions that spice up the now 'tired' and tested FPS formulae, changes such as only being able to carry two weapons and the almost imperceptible level loading. Other fun play dynamic variables include being able to pick up and use alien weapons and drive or fly different vehicles in the game including one or two alien craft. Another plus is that the artificial intelligence is more challenging than

all games reviewed on rection machines

Minimum Specification
 Pentium 3 733 MHz | 128 MB RAM | 8 x CD ROM | 32 MB D3D Video Accelerator
 1.3 GB HDD

☺ Looks lovely	☹ Terrible midsection
☺ Unique play dynamic	☹ Resource hog
☺ Great beginning & ending	☹ Dated

Summary
 An hour into the game you'll be thinking this is the next Half-Life but as you fight your way through the next few hours this exciting prospect fades to such an extent that the respectable ending, in the same style as the beginning, does little to make amends for the horrible cut and paste middle part of the game.

73

**Do U get the
feeling that
your ISP isn't
focused on ur
needs?**

pc review:



You can never truly know who you are. Sometimes things happen, and those things send your life, your destiny, hurtling off in a completely different direction from what you had expected - or ever thought possible. Take, for example, Chris Stone. At thirty-two years of age, he thought that he was going to be a plumber for the rest of his life. Until the Russians came...

Freedom Fighters from Io Interactive (who brought us the Hitman: Codename 47 games) introduces the player to an alternate reality - in this world, it was the Russians that dropped the bomb to end the Second World War. And they didn't stop there. Slowly but surely every country around the globe acquiesced to the Russian Bear, save the United States of America, which was blissfully isolated and difficult to reach. Until now. The start of the game sees the player's character, Chris Stone, thrown headlong into a world of rebellious

freedom fighting against the oppressive new government that has taken over his beloved New York City and the rest of the USA to boot. Under the banner of the soviet hammer and sickle, they mercilessly root out any resistance... but Chris is a fighter, if nothing else. Freedom Fighters is a third person action game that, while it feels like a tactical squad effort, is in fact more of an action shooter. The player is required to control Chris, and later a growing squad of fellow freedom fighters, in a variety of missions to help free New York City from the tyranny of its Soviet invaders. This game is incredibly simple to come to grips with, and is very addictive. It has a few aspects that remind one of the console versions - like specific save spots - but the game performs admirably on PC... easily outdoing it's console based twins.

With good graphics and possibly the best sound track I have ever heard in a PC title, Freedom Fighters sucks the player in and engrosses them in this titanic struggle

for liberty. As play progresses, the character gains more charisma, which enables him to get more followers to take on missions. These followers can be given simple "assault" or "defend" commands only and, while the AI could have been better, they generally handle situations pretty well. Initially the game seemed very short - however, a decent twist in the tale sets in motion around halfway through the game, allowing the player hours more of its addictive action. Freedom Fighters is very challenging and, like the Hitman titles, individual missions may require a few retries. Despite this, the game does seem to get a little old after a while. One finds oneself doing similar things all the time. Yet the tactics required to complete individual missions do vary, so the game never really settles

down into being boring.

The lack of multiplayer mode is conspicuous and rather disappointing. While the game does allow the player to revisit any number of locations after its completion, a multiplayer mode would have added a lot more value to the title.

Still, the game is far from lack lustre. Missions are involved (often requiring the player to jump back and forth between multiple locations, trying to achieve lesser goals in order to make success possible) and the story line is good, although not entirely fresh. And I think that it's safe to say we will see Freedom Fighters 2 before too long...



▲ Making use of handy, rather explosive vehicles makes things easier...

▼ "I'll take you all on, one at a time!"



▲ A meeting in the sewer base - codename "Sierra - Hotel - Indigo - Tango"



AOpen®

all games reviewed on rection machines

Minimum Specification

Pentium III 733 MHz | 128 MB RAM | 4 x CD ROM | 32 MB D3D Video Accelerator
 650 MB HDD

- ⊕ Excellent sound track
- ⊕ Engrossing
- ⊕ Good graphics

- ⊗ Frustrating
- ⊗ No multiplayer
- ⊗ Can get a bit "old"

Summary

This tactical action shooter is a great new game from the makers of Hitman: Codename 47. An alternate universe sees the USA invaded by Soviets, and it is up to the player to lead a band of intrepid freedom fighters against the interlopers. Excellent fun, but sadly lacking multiplayer capabilities.

84

Enough said!!!!

mex.com
sa

Anything but square.

Internet connections for every taste and pocket

011 791 7975

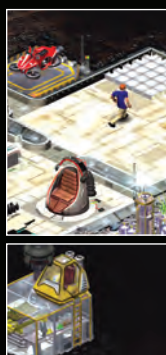
www.mexcomsa.com

pc review:

NOW
AVAILABLE



space colony



Building a successful colony on a foreboding rock hurtling through the cold, dark reaches of space is not something new to PC gaming. But the one factor that has always been overlooked in this type of game is the fact that there are people in these colonies, and their personalities will not always necessarily be compatible. So, then, how exactly do you stop Ingmar from stuffing Betty Sue in the air-lock because she has an annoying laugh?

Although this title from Firefly Studios (who brought us the Stronghold series) has been termed "the Sims in Space" by more than a few people, the truth is quite far from that. What we are presented with in this title is a complex management game that requires the player to establish and run a variety of space colonies on various planets. The management though is a little deeper than one might think because, unlike previous titles with similar ideas, this one needs the player to pay a lot more attention to the people that staff the colony. In short, while frantically building and working to meet what can often be unreasonable deadlines, the player also has to baby sit twenty or so rather distinct



personalities and although it does sound like more hassle than it is worth, Space Colony does prove to be rather fun in an "Oh, no, what now" kind of way. While the player has his hands full putting a base together, the added problem of keeping the staff at the base happy makes for chaotic and fun gaming. Why bother, though? Why should any effort be made to make these simulated humans happy when they can just be forced into a form of quasi slave labour to get the job done on time. The answer is quite simple,

really... unhappy characters do not work as long or hard as ones who are in a good mood... therefore, to meet some of those already mentioned tight deadlines, the player needs to strike a good balance between base management and people pleasing.

While the overall premise behind the game isn't really all that new, the approach taken to the genre is very unique. The player will quickly learn how to deal with the various characters that they encounter - and will also learn that they are not all that easy to control. Space Colony makes for hours of rather entertaining and challenging fun.

On the technical side of things, Space Colony is nothing really new. The graphics are sprite based, the game play is largely point and click, and the control system is a comfortably usable collection of commands. However, the graphics are pretty, even for sprites, and the voice acting is rather good - a few of the comments passed by the colonists are quite funny indeed.

With missions ranging from basic base building to frantic deadline challenges and chaotic alien invasions, Space Colony offers a lot to the management fan. Players may find the game frustrating - with certain missions needing to be done just right - but the addictive nature of the game dynamic and the overall fun of the title should keep them pleased for a good many hours. Custom missions can also be designed - as if the game wasn't long enough to start with!



AOpen®

all games reviewed on rection machines

Minimum Specification

Pentium III 800 MHz | 64 MB RAM | 8 x CD ROM | 4 MB D3D Video Accelerator
 850 MB HDD

- ☺ Original
- ☺ Great voice acting
- ☺ Long

- ☹ Dated graphics
- ☹ Frustrating

Summary

Space Colony is a rather new look at an old idea - take a space colony management title, and add the dynamics of twenty distinct personalities to the game. It is a fun and engaging title, with lots to do (sometimes too much) and tons of challenge for the player. Some aspects may seem a bit dated, but the title is very solid, overall...

81

Witness the Evolution of Extreme with Sapphire

- ◆ No 1. ATI-brand of Graphic Card Solutions. Now available in South Africa!
- ◆ The ULTIMATE Silent Series Graphic Card Solutions. ◆ RADEON IGP Chipset Based Mainboard solutions ◆ Superior Quality - ISO 9001 and ISO14001 Manufacturer
- ◆ Over 200 Press Awards in the last 12 months!



ATLANTIS 9800XT *The King of the Hill*

- ◆ 8 Pixel Pipes - 2.8 GigaPixel Fill Rate
- ◆ Full Microsoft DX9 Features
- ◆ 256MB of Extreme DDR Memory
- ◆ OVERDRIVE overlocking from ATI
- ◆ DVI-i and TV-outputs
- ◆ Sapphire Software Bundle



ATLANTIS 9600XT *For the Enthusiast*

- ◆ 4 Pixel Pipes - 2GigaPixel Fill Rate
- ◆ Full Microsoft DX9 Features
- ◆ 128MB of 600MHz DDR Memory
- ◆ OVERDRIVE overlocking from ATI
- ◆ DVI-i and TV-outputs
- ◆ Sapphire Software Bundle



RADEON

Graphics by ATI, Ultimate by SAPPHIRE

Distributor:



IT DISTRIBUTION DYNAMICS

TEL. +27 11 7075000 Fax: +27 11 7075050



SAPPHIRE

www.sapphiretech.co.za

SA Office: +27 11 314 6201, info@sapphiretech.co.za

pc review:



hidden & dangerous 2



With the high number of World War II computer games being released today, publishers are running the risk of releasing sub-standard titles that will do more harm to the genre than good. Take 2's latest offering, Hidden & Dangerous 2, will appeal to gamers who are looking for something that offers more than the standard "shoot first and ask questions later" affair.

For the uninitiated, Hidden & Dangerous 2 builds on the success of the critically acclaimed debut title in the series. It puts the player in the ranks of the elite Special Air Service (SAS) unit of the British military shortly after it was formed in 1940.

Essentially, the player is given control of a squad of four members and must complete twenty missions taking place during World War II. The locations are as varied as Norway, North Africa, Burma and Northern France and takes place from 1941 to 1945.

There are five single-player games to choose from. There is the standard campaign mode that simply takes the player through all twenty missions in sequence. Of course, if you are feeling up to something more difficult, there is a Lone Wolf mode that is similar to the campaign except that the player goes it on his/her own. Carnage mode should appeal to the bloodthirsty amongst us and tasks the player to complete the campaign mode but he/she has to take out all the enemies along the way. Single mission and single mission

carnage modes round off the single-player games. Unfortunately, the single missions are dependant on the campaign missions you complete. This lack of variety was a big letdown for me, since I was at least looking forward to playing different missions than those offered in the campaign mode. Having said that, the missions are challenging and varied enough to quell some of this criticism. The game allows players to select from 30

SAS members for a four-man squad. Each of these characters has different attributes and skills. For those who do not want to pick their own squad, the computer has an auto-select option that picks a well-balanced party [party? this isn't role-playing, Ed]. The player can also choose to select his/her own inventory for the squad or can opt for the computer to automatically complete it.

Players can select from either a first-person or third-person perspective to play in. However, in some missions there is also a tactical mode that allows the player to issue multiple commands to the different soldiers in the squad at one time. Essentially, this mode is similar to what a strategy title offers you and does simplify the squad management immensely.

Unfortunately, Hidden & Dangerous 2 does suffer from path-finding issues. Several times I found members of my squad wandering around aimlessly, or worse, walking right into enemy fire. However, I have yet to play a squad-based title that does not suffer from this in one way or the other.

Hidden & Dangerous 2 combines elements from other World War II titles in the market to form something that can be seen as unique or merely something that could be construed as a rehashing of what has come before it. It does offer the player something with more finesse than the brute force of Battlefield 1942. If you enjoy your military titles, then Hidden & Dangerous 2 will be right up your alley.



▲ Damn, these water bottles are uncomfortable



▲ Hands up who thinks they're going to survive this. Not so fast private...

AOpen®

all games reviewed on rection machines

Minimum Specification

Pentium III 1GHz | 128 MB RAM | 4 x CD ROM | 32 MB D3D Video Accelerator
 2.4 GB HDD

- ⊕ Tactical mode
- ⊕ Graphics
- ⊕ Realistic

- ⊗ Still buggy
- ⊗ Path-finding issues
- ⊗ Resource hog

Summary

Hidden & Dangerous 2 is a World War II action title that tries to offer the gamer as many things as possible. Whilst this is not a bad thing as such, it sees the game lacking an identity of its own. However, if you are a fan of World War II titles, then Hidden & Dangerous 2 will not disappoint.

75

WHO WILL YOU LEAD INTO BATTLE ?

THE FORCE
OF GOOD

THE POWER
OF EVIL

THE LORD OF THE RINGS WAR OF THE RING™



WWW.WAROFTHERING.COM



WWW.VUGAMES-EUROPE.COM



OFFICIAL GAME
Based on the literary works of J.R.R. Tolkien



"War of the Ring" interactive game © 2003 Vivendi Universal Games, Inc. All rights reserved. The Tolkien Enterprises logo, together with "The Lord of the Rings," "War of the Ring," "Middle-earth" and names of the characters, events, items, and places therein are trademarks or registered trademarks of The Saul Zaentz Company d/b/a Tolkien Enterprises under license to Vivendi Universal Games, Inc. Vivendi Universal Games, Inc. and the Vivendi Universal Games logo are trademarks of Vivendi Universal Games, Inc. "Sierra" and the Sierra logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sierra Entertainment, Inc., in the U.S. and/or other countries. All other logos are property of their respective owners.

pc review:



tiger woods pga tour 2004



▶ In gaming terms, it has been exactly a year since I have started writing for everyone's favourite gaming publication. For all the readers out there (sorry mom, you don't count), my first review was Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2003. With the release of Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004, one can see how much technology has improved during the past year. This latest incarnation of the Electronic Arts (EA) golf franchise brings with it several new features that should see it become a favourite amongst golfers.

One of these is the addition of Game Face technology. Essentially, this allows the player to create a golfer from scratch. Anyone who has ever played The Sims will immediately feel at home here since you can change everything on your golfer from his/her shoes to his/her eye colour.

Maybe EA is giving us a taste of what Sims 2 is going to offer, but the morphing technology on the facial features is truly amazing. What this means is that the gamer will be able to create an almost identical replica of himself/herself for the game world [and this is a good thing how? Ed].

Players will also be able to unlock

several new items ranging from tattoos to sunglasses the more successful he/she becomes in the game, meaning the more money you make in the Career Mode, the more sponsorship deals you will be able to unlock.

Developers Headgate Studios have also listened to PC golf fans clamouring for more detailed courses. Debuting in this version of Tiger Woods is the Course Life System that (depending on your system specifications) can recreate the atmosphere of a golf course to the final tee (ahem). Imagine playing Manu Kea during a beautiful sunrise or St. Andrews in a howling gale and you will start to appreciate what this means.

Fans will also be happy to know that they can choose between four different swing types. Obviously, there is the now standard 2-click, 3-click and TrueSwing mode. However, the TrueSwing mode now allows for both horizontal and vertical swing types.

TrueSwing enables the player to swing in real-time with rhythm and tempo being vital. Tiger Woods 2004 also features an improved TrueSwing Analyzer that breaks down the swing in four parts so the player knows exactly what he/she is doing wrong.

The Career Mode has also been significantly upgraded from last year's version. However, regular players should not worry too much as it does have the same feel to it. The player starts

off as a rookie and will need to compete in as many tournaments and golf challenges as possible to increase his/her earnings and, by implication, skills. It is a case of the more you play, the better you will become.

Tiger Woods 2004 also features casual rounds, individual tournaments and single seasons. The casual rounds offer players a plethora of games to choose from. This obviously caters for the dedicated golfer, but there are sufficient explanations regarding the rules of each mode of play to make it accessible to anyone.

The million-dollar question (okay, enough with the golf puns) is if Tiger Woods 2004 warrants the purchase if you have last year's title. I believe it does. It offers both newcomers to the franchise and grizzled veterans more than enough new features and courses to justify buying yet another golf title.



AOpen®

all games reviewed on rection machines

Minimum Specification
 Pentium II 333 MHz | 128 MB RAM | 8 x CD ROM | 32 MB D3D Video Accelerator
 1.3 GB HDD

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Game Face technology ⊕ Low system requirements ⊕ Career mode 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ Where's Ernie? ⊕ Graphic issues ⊕ More of the same
--	--

Summary
 Another year, another update to the EA Tiger Woods golf franchise with new features such as Game Face technology and the Course Life System will see avid golf fans prepare for another round of golf. If you do not own a golf title yet, then this is the best one on the market (for the time being).

80





Subscribe now and save R100

For your money you get the following:

■ 12 issues of New Age Gaming delivered to your postal address ■ 12 Cover CDs attached to the 12 issues delivered to your postal address ■ 12 clear plastic bags containing 12 issues of New Age Gaming delivered to your postal address also containing 12 Cover CD's ■ **Interesting** text to read each month... ■ **Exciting** files on the Cover CD ■ **The** satisfaction of knowing you have people out there who will pretend to like you because you paid them money ■ A nice 'suck-up' letter once a year reminding you to renew your subscription ■ Being able to say, 'I'm a subscriber' when you call or e-mail us and thinking we're going to treat you better than everyone else. What else...Umm, Yes! Save R 80.00 a year! Hang on... there's one more thing - never run the risk of missing an issue because you were too slow one day.

Yes, [I bought into the marketing hype] and I want to subscribe for R 340.00 - so hurry up and send me my first issue!

Your Title [Mr. or Mrs. Etc]: _____

Your Name [first name]: _____

and Surname [last name]: _____

Only R 340

◀Postal Address

Where must we send the magazine [please triple check this - if it's wrong and we have to send another issue just because of something you messed up, it's going to be deducted off your total remaining magazines]

Please choose payment method

Bank Deposit Cheque Postal Order

☐
☐
☐

The day you were born: _____

Your age: _____

Contact Details▶

Telephone work: _____

Telephone home: _____

Fax: _____

Cellular: _____

E-mail: _____

Can we send unsolicited material [special offers] to your postal address or E-mail address - you'll like them!

Yes No

☐
☐

Here are the Bank Account details [use these details when putting money into our bank account]

New Age Gaming Magazine - Nedbank - Account Number:1469 083 280 - Branch Code:146905 [Commercial Northrand]

Once you have paid the money into our account fax us a copy of the subscription form plus the bank deposit slip to [011] 704 2948 - no deposit slip = no subscription.

Please make cheques and postal orders out to 'New Age Gaming Magazine' and then mail the completed form above [Photostats are acceptable] to 'Subscription Department' P O Box 237 Olivedale 2158.

For further information please contact the subscriptions office on [011] 704 2701 between the hours of 09h00 & 15h00 or subs@nag.co.za anytime.

For those of you lacking a military background that's 9am in the morning to 3pm in the afternoon - if you can't call between those times then send an e-mail to subs@nag.co.za and if you don't have e-mail then send a fax anytime to [011] 704 2948. Please make sure you write clearly. With e-mail and fax enquiries expect to be contacted within 24 hours of sending your enquiry.

Please allow 4-6 weeks delivery for your first issue. Although we try our best to ensure you have your magazine before everyone else this sometimes just isn't the case. Just remember the point of a subscription is convenience and saving cash - not getting it before everyone else.

Please note that all the outlined subscription rates and offers are only valid for postal addresses in South Africa. If you live outside the borders of South Africa and would like to receive the magazine on a monthly basis please contact the subscription department directly for pricing.

pc review:



command & conquer generals: zero hour



Just because Westwood Studios were absorbed by EA Games doesn't mean that their C&C series has ended. The Command & Conquer franchise continues with an expansion pack for the excellent real-time strategy game Generals.

The Command & Conquer series has always been known for the high quality of its packaging and documentation, and this is true of this expansion for Generals. Upon first opening the package, the user is faced with a comprehensive manual and a technical support booklet. Installing the game takes some time, as has been true of virtually all of the C&C titles. Once in the game, we are treated to a regrettably brief introductory video, which seems to be a trend in games these days. Since Generals, cut-scenes have been getting replaced with in-game cinematic sequences. This is sad in some ways, although Zero Hour's in-game rendered sequences are superior to those found in the base game. The graphics maintain the standard set in Generals, and are consistent with the base game, which is not always



the case in expansion packs.

This promotes a feeling of continuity. The sound effects, too, are consistent, and the voice acting features the slightly humorous feel that has become a trademark of the C&C series.

Zero Hour's main emphasis appears to be to promote differing playing styles. In addition to a great selection of new units and technologies (the GLA workers finally get some shoes!), Zero Hour also introduces three variants to each faction.

The interface has also received some much-needed enhancements; for example, all powers that run off timers now appear at the right-hand edge of the main view, so no longer is it necessary to assign numerical hot-keys to things like nuclear missiles and radar scans, freeing up keys for squads of units.

The single-player campaigns are somewhat disappointing - it seems the emphasis is continually shifting toward multiplayer gaming. Each campaign consists of five missions, and although this is not exactly plentiful, they are considerably more challenging than those in Generals. Furthermore, the tech-trees are climbed much faster, with players reaching the top weapons and technologies sooner.

A new single-player mode has also been added, called the Generals Challenge. This mode allows you to play with any of the nine new factions, and pits you against each of the others, as well as adding a unique challenge at the series. These games are played against an AI opponent with a fully set up base that needs to be eliminated. This mode makes up for the deficient campaign mode.

Lastly, new battle honours have been introduced. These are medals that keep track

of a player's achievements, and were a popular feature in Generals. The battle honours have now been refined to reflect more detail, and include several new categories, including the Ultimate Honor - win on each map against the maximum number of hard opponents.



all games reviewed on recontron machines

Minimum Specification

Pentium III 800 MHz | 128 MB RAM | 8X CD ROM | 32 MB D3D Video Accelerator
 1.4 GB HDD (excluding Generals installation)

- World builder
- Strategic depth
- Cinematic feel
- Loading times
- Space hog
- Shallow story line

Summary

Fans of strategy games in general, and Generals specifically, should love this one. Zero Hour adds strategic depth by opening up new options and possibilities. Enhancements to the base game's interface make it even more playable than ever. The new Challenge mode assures many, many hours of play!

80

12 ways to wage war

In addition to the three base factions originally introduced in Generals, Zero Hour adds three variants to each of them. Each of these variant factions caters to a different playing style. Below is a tabulation of all the types of generals available.

USA:	China:	GLA:
Air superiority	Infantry	Explosives
Laser weapons	Tanks	Toxins
Super weapons	Nuclear weapons	Stealth

Each of the above generals emphasises its particular focus, with trade-offs in other areas. For example, the USA super weapons general builds Particle Cannons at half price and has better bombers available, but vehicles cost more, and no tanks are available. Furthermore, each general features unique units and/or technologies that are unavailable to any other faction.

pc review:



Microsoft's Age of Mythology broke from "Age" tradition by departing from the seriously historical and venturing into the mystical realms of mythology and magic. The Titans expansion continues this by introducing a fourth faction - Atlantis.

The faction brings in its own pantheon of deities for the player to worship. These are the titans, ancient rivals of the Olympian gods. The new deities bring new powers



and civilisation bonuses along. Once again, the player is required to choose a major god to worship, and chooses between two minor gods at every advancement level. The Atlanteans are rather different from the other factions. They gather favour as a steady income from their existing town centres - the more towns, the faster favour is collected. Their most characteristic overall quality is an affinity for mobility. One of the major titans allows a player to teleport his or her buildings. The minor titans offer air passages and underground passages, which can be likened to GLA tunnel networks in C&C: Generals. For those of you unfamiliar with that game, these are structures that can be entered by units. These units can then exit through any of the same type of structure that the player controls. Of course, the Atlanteans are also quite adept in terms of seamanship.

Another distinction of the new faction is the fact that any Atlantean unit can be upgraded to be a hero. While these heroes are not, singly, as powerful as heroes of other races tend to be, a player using Atlantis can expect to have many, many heroes indeed! This, of course, has its

disadvantages, as heroes are more susceptible to certain attacks, while also being less susceptible to others. The titans are also fond of myth units, and the Atlantean side has a somewhat larger selection of these than do the other races.

For fans of Age of Mythology, this expansion pack is rather important - while it doesn't meddle hugely with the existing factions, it introduces an entire new one that complements the others rather well. Titans also features a very engaging single-player campaign with interesting and entertaining missions - players can expect a more varied experience than the one provided by the original. On the downside, however, the game is still an "Ages" game, which means it generally takes ages to play! If you're looking for pace, look elsewhere. But if not, then this game can provide many hours of amusement.

- ⊕ Engaging campaign
- ⊕ Robust interface
- ⊖ More of the same, really
- ⊖ Boring soundtrack

73

Join us...

...and we'll give you 50% of the value of all your Rythmic Beat purchases back in the form of credits. These will be paid into your Backbeat account on the 5th of the following month. You may then use them at your discretion as part or full payment for any purchases at any Rythmic Beat store.



R1200 gives you 12 months membership and thousands of CD's, games and DVD's to choose from



Dark Chronicle

In the future, a rebellion forces an evil madman to travel through time to eliminate the origins of a growing threat. In the present, a world is dying and a single town remains. An inventive young man, with the help of a visiting time traveller, must embark on an epic quest to combat the madman's evil plans and save the world.



Rugby 2004

Strap on your boots! For true sports fans looking for the unique thrill of rugby, EA SPORTS Rugby 2004 is the most complete and authentic rugby game available. Building on the success of EA SPORTS Rugby 2001, this is world rugby at its body-ramming, bullet-passing, try-scoring best.

pc review:



It's Rugby World Cup fever time again and EA have released their latest Rugby game just in time to capture the hype. The Rugby World Cup is a spectacular event but the biggest difficulty that any rugby game is going to have is the complexity of the modern game and its finicky rules. EA have managed to capture this with the FIFA series but I'm afraid Rugby 2004 is a lacklustre bug ridden affair, almost as bad as the Springboks of late with Samoa outscoring us against England, anyone for tiddlywinks?



EA rocked us with the FIFA and NFL series, so it was with great anticipation that I installed Rugby 2004, especially with RWC 2003 here. After playing and enjoying both FIFA 2003 and Madden NFL 2004 I really thought that Rugby 2004 would live up to these great titles, boy was I wrong.

Rugby 2004 might be okay on PS2 because they are used to crummy low resolution graphics, but we power hungry PC users like eye candy and a simple control system, and direct PS2 ports in general leave much to be desired.

Once you get a game going it goes from bad to worse, the controls are difficult to learn never mind master, trying to grubber ahead is an exercise in futility never mind the scrums and line outs. I just ended up running from side to side until I managed to score or get a penalty, trying more advanced moves is frustrating and leads to a very one dimensional play dynamic. Players are not badly rendered but seem to have massive heads - I'm guessing HB studios had access to the FIFA 98/99 engine as the game is just not up to the high EA standard.

HB studios threw too many game options in without concentrating on building a solid foundation; we could have done without the 85 stadiums and other texture wastage. A solid play dynamic and decent graphics with multiplayer would have gone a long way to creating a good rugby game. The only satisfaction I got from the game was beating England and winning the RWC for South

rugby 2004



Africa.

Sound is normally a highlight in EA games, in Rugby 2004 it borders on disastrous, from commentary delays to actual sound stuttering and loss. Computer AI seems to take on a life of its own and I won a match without having to do anything except score the try itself; rucks and mauls are totally out of the players control and this contributes to the overall feeling that you are not in control.

Multiplayer is a joke, unless you consider four people around the same monitor multiplayer action. Rugby 2004 is aimed squarely at console users, PC user's best steer well clear of this half hearted attempt that aims only to part you from your hard earned cash. I'm guessing that Rugby is going to be one of those impossible to simulate games and we'll just have find another way to tackle Jona Lomu.



AOpen®

all games reviewed on rection machines

Minimum Specification

Pentium 500 MHz | 256 MB RAM | 24 x CD ROM | 32 MB D3D Video Accelerator
 2.4 GB HDD

- ☺ Beat England
- ☺ Get to play in RWC 2003
- ☺ Win RWC 2003

- ☹ Sound issues
- ☹ Control issues
- ☹ Lost to England in real life

Summary

With a few patches it could be a goodish game. Unfortunately Rugby 2004 is not that game. For all its hassles I still enjoyed the experience as rugby has been one of the most difficult games to simulate, although NFL 2004 is amazing compared to Rugby 2004 and shows what can be achieved with more development time and money.

40



The Gift List



cut along line

cut along line

PlayStation 2 PlayStation 2 PlayStation 2 PlayStation 2 PlayStation 2

Dear ☐ Mom ☐ Dad ☐ Brother ☐ Sister ☐ Gran ☐ Friend ☐ Other (tick appropriate)

Thank you for being the best _____ (as above) In the whole world. As you may know the happy season is around the corner. The last thing I would want you to do is waste hours and hours shopping for a gift for me.

In the spirit of giving I have decided to **GIVE** you this card with some ideas. This will save you hours of precious time. Everything I do is to make your life easier.

Bless you in this time of love and happiness.

Love _____ (insert your name)



PlayStation 2 PlayStation 2 PlayStation 2 PlayStation 2 PlayStation 2

Distributed Exclusively by World Web Entertainment

Tel: 011 462 0150 www.ww.e.co.za email: sales@ww.e.co.za

All rights and trademarks and logos are copyright of their respective owners

GET READY TO PLAY...



pc review:



In 1982 a movie called TRON sucked us into a computer world that was fresh and exciting (the light cycle races really were impressive), and I remember thinking that this may one day make an extremely interesting game but back in 1982 computer graphics where a misnomer. Skip forward 20 years or so and guess what, someone else also thought it might make a good game. Using the Monolith engine Buena Vista Entertainment has re-created the world of TRON whilst bringing it up-to-date with the inclusion of modern technology. All those born after 1982 might not enjoy TRON but the game is stunning in parts with a few niggles that prevent it being a must buy FPS.

Let's get one thing straight TRON 2.0 will definitely appeal to a select group of people, this group would consist of people who have seen the movie and wanted to ride a light cycle, TRON 2.0 satisfies this crowd while still offering a unique and entertaining FPS experience. TRON 2.0 is made up of more hits than misses and serves up a dash of originality in an otherwise boring FPS scene.

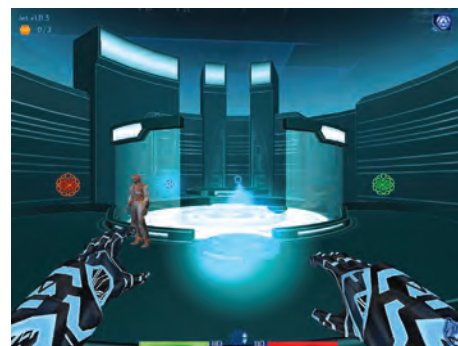
The game starts 20 years after the original movie, you play Jet Bradley, son of Alex Bradley who has disappeared, and your task is to find out what happened, unfortunately you get sucked into Ma3a to fight a rogue program that is infecting her (sounds familiar...

TRON 2.0 is definitely a stunning game to behold, the movie was colourful but it almost dulls in comparison with the game - sporting the new LithTech Triton engine, TRON 2.0 is candy for the eyes, I shudder to think about the amount of time the artistic crew put into this title. Level design from stage to stage was unique, giving you a real sense of the environment you find yourself in. The play dynamic even with all it's pretence to be something

different is still your standard FPS fare with a bit of role-playing, you kill stuff and you collect stuff, you upgrade stuff and then you get to kill some more stuff. The routine is broken up with the occasional light cycle mission that always seems very difficult against the quick reacting artificial intelligence - this led to reloading on more than one occasion (*&\$#). Also included is my least favourite type of FPS puzzle, jumping - I hate jumping puzzles as I die way too often (God mode - on).

For us computer junkies the play dynamic is pure entertainment - power-ups are sub-routines, these sub-routines come in different flavours - alpha, beta and gold, each one taking up less memory than the one before (this is important for levels where memory is limited i.e. PDA level) allowing access to more powerful weapons and abilities. Your character also gets upgrades allowing you to distribute to health, armour, download, speed etc. Although TRON 2.0 is engrossing I always seemed to be waiting for it to get more exciting or intense, the cut scenes and voice acting is top class and add to the TRON world, fans will love it but the unwashed masses might not find it so intriguing. Multiplayer is a lukewarm attempt, consisting of disc battles and light cycle components resulting in an average experience. Disc battles are quite fun but the light cycle multiplayer reminded me of a snazzier version of snake, all which kept this jaded FPS junkie entertained for a day or two.

TRON 2.0 brings the TRON universe to life, I for one enjoyed it immensely but non-fans might not feel the same way (try the demo first). TRON 2.0 is not a fight fest and sometimes you feel more like a passenger than the driver but the scenery sure is pretty. It's a title worth playing just for the technical brilliance, and shows where graphics are headed over the next few months.



tron - the movie

Released in 1982, TRON captivated audiences with cutting edge graphics and a unique story. Before serious CGI became commonplace in movies, special effects were limited and briefly seen here and there, TRON offered a different view of computers using hand drawn techniques to immerse people in a 'realistic' computer world. Incidentally the 20th Anniversary DVD is available for fans, and includes 5 hours of bonus footage - staring a very young Jeff Bridges, TRON was remarkable when it came out and still retains some of this charm 20 years on.



AOpen®

all games reviewed on rection machines

Minimum Specification

Pentium 500 MHz | 256 MB RAM | 24 x CD ROM | 32 MB D3D Video Accelerator
 2.4 GB HDD

☺ Yeah... TRON

☺ Light Cycles

☺ Graphics are dazzling

☺ Yeah... TRON, Who?!

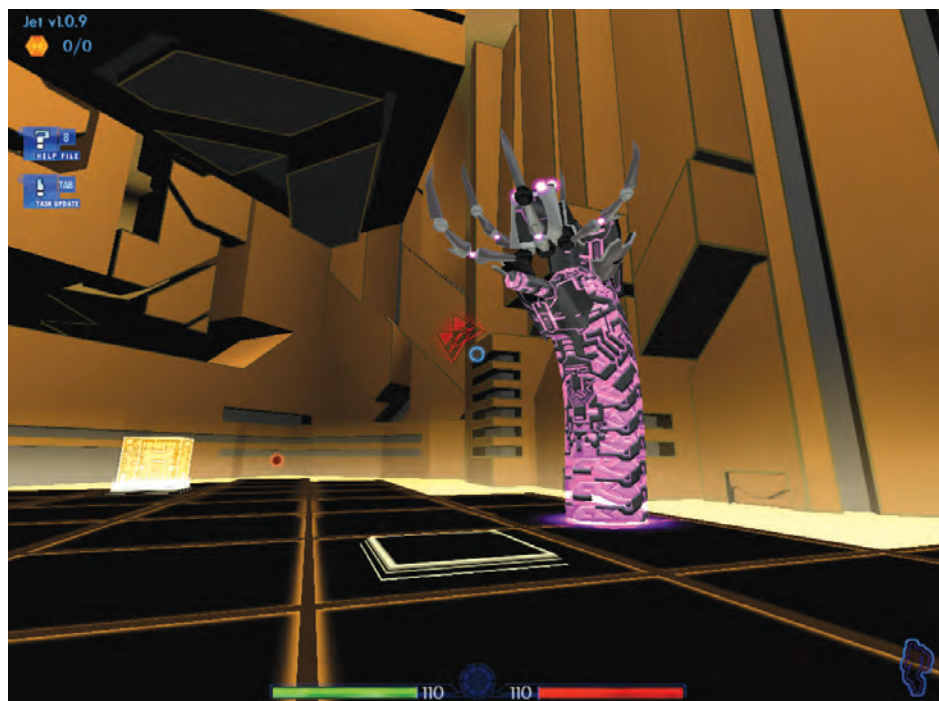
☺ Light Cycles

☺ Multiplayer

Summary

TRON 2.0 is a great title, but is let down by a poor multiplayer (then who needs multiplayer). The single player should keep you interested enough to finish the game. TRON 2.0 has amazing graphics that show the power of Monolith's Engine Technology that will have id and Valve looking over their shoulders.

83



PC
CD

The Gift List

PC
CD

cut along line

cut along line

PC CD-ROM PC CD-ROM PC CD-ROM PC CD-ROM PC CD-ROM PC CD-ROM PC

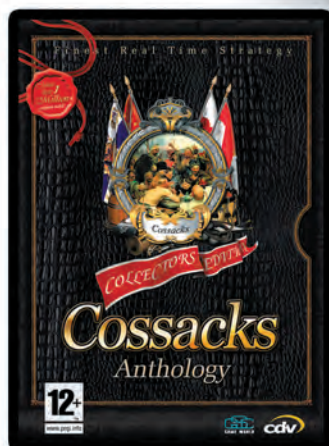
Dear ☐ Mom ☐ Dad ☐ Brother ☐ Sister ☐ Gran ☐ Friend ☐ Other (tick appropriate)

Thank you for being the best _____ (as above) In the whole world. As you may know the happy season is around the corner. The last thing I would want you to do is waste hours and hours shopping for a gift for me.

In the spirit of giving I have decided to GIVE you this card with some ideas. This will save you hours of precious time. Everything I do is to make your life easier.

Bless you in this time of love and happiness.

Love _____ (insert your name)



PC CD-ROM PC CD-ROM PC CD-ROM PC CD-ROM PC CD-ROM PC CD-ROM PC

Distributed Exclusively by World Web Entertainment

Tel: 011 462 0150 www.ww.e.co.za email: sales@ww.e.co.za

All rights and trademarks and logos are copyright of their respective owners

GET READY TO PLAY...



ps2 review:



When you double cross people, you should make sure that you do the job right. Otherwise, they may come looking for you when they least expect it. And, worst of all, they may be driving MINI Coopers...

I have not seen The Italian Job movie yet, but I think I may want to after playing the game. If the film is anything like this title, it's bound to be action packed, full of stunts and resplendent with over the top action. And, of course, there's the whole Charlize Theron thing...

Back to the game. As far as games go, The Italian Job is nothing really original or ground breaking. However, it is a mad rush of a title, full of fast cars and reckless driving practices. And it has oh so much to do, with a story mode, stunt courses, racing, free driving modes, multiplayer capabilities and more. Unlocks include new cars, movie information and stills, new tracks and the like.

The hero of the title really is the spry little MINI Cooper, which is the vehicle of choice for most of the missions the player has to undertake. And a wide variety of missions they are: ranging from wild dashes against the clock to careful "tailing" missions, they're all here.

The Italian Job does not particularly stand out for any one reason. In fact, when considering each aspect of the game individually, it generally comes across as average: the graphics are ok, the sound is not bad, and the controls are workable. However, when the whole thing is put together it really does perform well. Why? Because it is really fun, with just the right amount of challenge and frustration thrown in for measure.



the italian job: la heist

the movie

The game based on the movie which was also released this year, based on the movie which was released in 1969.



The Italian Job (1969)



The Italian Job (2003)

Directed by:
Lead character:

Peter Collinson
Michael Caine

F. Gary Gray
Mark Wahlberg

Nuggets of useless info

- In a 2003 UK movie survey, Charlie Croker's (Michael Caine) line, "You're only supposed to blow the bloody doors off!" was voted the most memorable line in any film.
- Lyle (Seth Green) claims he was the creator of Napster, and that Shawn Fanning stole it from him. It shows a flash back of Lyle sleeping, and a person taking a disk out of the PC that has Napster on it. The person is really Shawn Fanning, the creator of Napster.
- When Shawn Fanning steals the idea of Napster, the bottom of a Metallica poster can be seen on the wall. Metallica was one of the bands that brought about the end of Napster.
- In addition to the stunt driving courses they went on, the actors got two days' driving tuition from Damon Hill, the British ex-world champion Formula 1 driver. All the cast members acknowledged that Charlize Theron was easily the best driver among them.
- Surprisingly, for a game based on a movie, none of the movie actors voices were even used in the game except during the cut scenes of the movie.



Minimum Specification

1 - 2 players | vibration compatible | Analog compatible

- Great fun
- Nice variety
- MINI Cooper!

Mediocre individual aspects

Summary

The Italian Job is based on the new remake of the 1969 film. It is a crazy game full of thrills and spills, fast paced action and tons of fun. It is rather typical of a driving game, though, with nothing truly new to offer. However, on the whole, the game is a worthwhile pursuit, if even just for the opportunity to drive a MINI Cooper through a sidewalk cafe...

78

What happens next?

- Fall to your doom
- Hacked to death by guards
- Control time and live to fight another day*


PRINCE OF PERSIA

THE SANDS OF TIME™



*Control time. It's the ultimate power. But use it wisely. Rewind time to escape death. Freeze time and your enemies during combat. Look ahead of time to plan future moves. We'd all take more risks if we could control time.

www.prince-of-persia.com
www.playstation.co.za

 PlayStation 2


UBISOFT™

pc review:

Wanting to become a fire-fighter is one of those dreams that every little boy has had at some point, like being an astronaut, or a cowboy even. Computer games have supplied virtual versions of the latter two for some time now, but this is the first title I've seen in which you take the role of a fireman. Or a Fire Chief, in fact, which is also the title of this release incidentally enough.



flame, smoke and water animations are also a welcome addition to an already atmospheric world. This game gives you access to a number of fire fighting vehicles as well, from helicopters to trucks with large high-

pressure hoses attached. The units are also varied: there are run-of-the-mill firemen, medics, technical specialists and even hazardous environment specialists. Each have their own unique capabilities which you must make use of to successfully navigate a level. Commanding your team is easy thanks to an intuitive point-and-click interface. The missions themselves can be quite challenging at times, with events like flashovers and hidden explosive objects bringing in an element of immense danger. Scenarios include forest fires, nuclear plant blazes and even burning banks.

Fire propagates believably and dynamically thanks to "hotspots" which the game engine constantly calculates,

and at the end of the day Fire Chief turned out to be far more polished than I had expected. It might not be a top-notch title, but it's certainly an enjoyable couple of hours at least for both the wannabe fire-fighter and regular RTS gamer.



- ⊕ Nice graphics, excellent animations
- ⊕ Well set atmosphere
- ⊕ Excellent control system
- ⊕ 1.5 GB is a lot of space
- ⊕ No "mood music" whatsoever

83

pc review:

Ever been waiting in line for your fifth ride on your favourite rollercoaster, looked up at the high-g turns and vertical plunges, and thought "With a small loop just before the hard left, this coaster could pull even faster speeds down the 360-degree twist...?"

This title, Hyper Rails, is squarely targeted at you if you answered in the affirmative to my opening question. It's all about building the wildest, meanest, fastest and downright scariest coaster imaginable in a fully 3D virtual world. Nothing less will do.

After launching Hyper Rails you're presented with a CAD-like design interface where you can begin the creation of your machine of fear. Don't be fooled, though, this game is actually even harder to get around than a CAD suite.

The biggest problem in this coaster editing mode is the



complete and utter lack of any form of help or guidance. There isn't even useful information on pop-ups if you hold your cursor over an item or option. In fact, there are no pop-ups whatsoever, which make the entirely symbol-based process impossible without the manual by your side.

However, once you've clawed your way up this incredibly steep learning curve, designing a coaster is actually quite straightforward. Once complete, you can see your masterpiece by walking on the roads you placed, or by taking a ride yourself. This mode of the game, I hoped, was where the fun began!

But sadly the title continued to disappoint.

The graphics are really below standard for a 3D game in this hardware era. No reflections, no real lighting to speak of, and abundant texture problems are fatal additions to Hyper Rails. Even though the coaster tracks themselves are rendered smoothly, and

the audio clearly proves that the developers spent a lot of time on these devices doing "research", there's no joy to be gleaned here whatsoever.



- ⊕ Decent audio
- ⊕ Impression of being on a coaster not shabby
- ⊕ Nice details on tracks and cars
- ⊕ Challenging to learn
- ⊕ Poor graphics with glitches
- ⊕ Can barely be classed as a game

37



Best
Monitor
for Eyes

Anything's possible with
FLATRON™



FLATRON™ F700P
- 1920x1440 @ 65Hz
- 0.24mm Stripe pitch
- W-ARAS coating



FLATRON™ 776FM
- 1280x1024 @ 66Hz
- 0.24mm Stripe pitch
- W-ARAS coating



FLATRON™ 774FT
- 1280x1024 @ 66Hz
- 0.24mm Stripe pitch
- W-ARAS coating

WHY?

...100% FLATRON! As the world's only true 100% flat screen monitor, LG Flatron has earned itself the reputation of being the 'Best Monitor for Eyes' in both Germany and the Ukraine.

Screen technology specifically developed to protect the user's eyes: W-ARAS coating that significantly reduces external light reflection, and maximises the transmission rate, while the frontal tinted glass shields the naked eye from the harmful rays emitted by the monitor. And all this is only possible with 100% flat screen technology. No more distorted images, less eyestrain, and up to 80% less harmful rays and emissions than conventional monitors.

You won't find a monitor that's better for your eyes.

Recognised internationally with a Blue Angel mark of approval (for environmental concerns and the highest standards in technical excellence), and approved by the Ukraine Ministry of Health



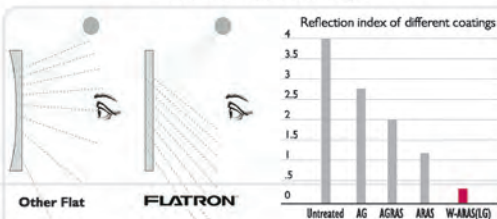
True Flat

LG Flatron F900B
- Horizontal frequency 98 KHz tube
- Maximum resolution of 2048 x 1536 @ 61Hz
- Up to 80% less glare with W-ARAS coating
- 0.24mm stripe pitch
- USB hub

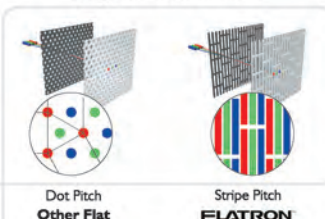
No Distortion



80% less harmful rays



Brighter and clearer



pc review:

When it comes to didactic management titles there are few that can touch Microsoft's Zoo Tycoon series. OK, so the inclusion of dinosaurs in a "realistic" zoo simulation series is pushing things a bit, but we can still learn about them...

Microsoft either do it, or they don't. With Zoo Tycoon,



they did it... well enough, in fact, that they have decided to release all three Zoo Tycoon titles bundled together in a product called the Zoo Tycoon Complete Collection. That's right - you can now build all three zoo styles (normal, dinosaur and marine) in one, with just one purchase. And, just to sweeten the deal, they even included a group of new endangered species, as well as exclusive downloadable content. For all intents and

purposes, it's a great idea. However, one would expect a title that goes out to be so very informative to get things right... like the fact that African Wild Dogs don't actually bark.

Overall, nothing (except for the new content) has changed. The bundle does include all the game updates available, which is nice, and allows themes in terms of setting, but other than that, don't expect too much new. In fact, this is something to buy only if you don't own the other Zoo Tycoon titles.

That said, this is a great title for the youngsters, as it stimulates them on more than one level. Not only do they

zoo tycoon: complete collection

have to think about the management of the park, but they also get to learn about the real counterparts of the virtual animals they keep in their project.



- ⊕ Very informative
- ⊕ Extra animals
- ⊗ Some mistakes
- ⊗ Nothing really "new"

77

pc review:

Once upon a time, pirates were the scourge of the high seas. They pillaged and raided their way across several colonies in the new world, and gained reputations across the world as terrifying personages. These days, pirates are pretty much restricted to the world of entertainment and, on the PC - they are also becoming something of a scourge...

After Pirates of the Caribbean, one is a little antsy when



tortuga: pirates of the new world

approaching another pirate title.

However, Tortuga: Pirates of the New World is a different kind of animal entirely. In fact, it is even tamer than one would first imagine. While the blurb on the back of the box would have you believe that you get to roam the seas with your enemies' liver in your teeth, the fact is that this is a pretty tame point and click management simulation.

Basically, the game alternates between trading supplies between new world colonies and running afoul of enemy ships.

There are several campaigns based on the various nationalities who populate the colonies of the new world (Dutch, Spanish, French and so on) as well as some free play modes as well.

The game is graphically tame and has a control system so simple that it actually gets boring after a while - right click to sail, left click to fire the cannons. Sure, you can really get into the whole history and the "empire" that you can build as you earn money and a reputation, but it would take an unusual level of dedication to achieve that.

So as long as you don't expect much in the way of decks awash with blood, you may enjoy this. It's hardly tense, and it's only as exciting as a simple management game gets. It's not bad - just a bit tame.



- ⊕ Interesting distraction
- ⊕ Easy to play
- ⊗ Too simple
- ⊗ A bit tame

62

ps2 review:



Dark Chronicle, the sequel to the relatively unknown title, Dark Cloud, has arrived in all its cel-shaded glory, and though the first title was widely considered to have been mediocre at best, Level-5 has done a phenomenal job with the sequel, a must for any console RPG fan, and most other gamers besides.

Dark Chronicle tells the story of Maximilian, a youth with somewhat of a penchant for engineering who, thanks to being given a mysterious red amulet by his father, soon finds himself on a quest to save the world, with the assistance of Monica, a princess from the future. The storyline can by no means be considered too unusual or unique, but it nonetheless manages to be compelling, and never feels contrived. The most innovative aspect of Dark Chronicle, however, is undoubtedly the play dynamic - although the game begins as an RPG, in a very similar vein to titles like Kingdom Hearts, as you progress further, several other genres and mini-games creep into the dynamic, including city-creation (which, ultimately, becomes the primary method of advancing the story, though you'll still need to scrounge the various parts from countless dungeons), weapon-crafting, fish

breeding, and almost countless others. Sadly, however, many of these only appear after playing the game for a significant amount of time, though there's still plenty to keep you entertained until they do, and once unlocked, these features add considerably to the title's longevity - it could quite conceivably take months to fully exhaust the possibilities of Dark Chronicle. Add to this breathtakingly exquisite cel-shaded graphics, and superb voice-acting, and Dark Chronicle is quite obviously one of the richest PS2 titles around, both in terms of quantity and quality - the only gripe I have is



that the interface can make switching between tasks more arduous than it should be. It's an extremely difficult task to attempt to adequately describe the intricacies of this game, and its depth truly needs to be experienced to be believed. Thankfully, however, each new mechanism of the play dynamic is introduced in a very user-friendly manner, and there are also explanatory videos that are unlocked along with each feature, so the experience never becomes too daunting, and the learning curve is quite comfortable - generally, nothing new is introduced until you've had time to get to grips with the last development. Ultimately, Dark Chronicle is a spectacular title, simply oozing with class and polish, and there is more than enough on offer to keep anyone entertained for, quite literally, days on end - it comes highly recommended to all PS2 owners.

- ⊕ Incredible depth
- ⊕ Wonderful graphics
- ⊕ Excellent voice-acting
- ⊖ Interface is cumbersome at times

90

developer: zono [] publisher: electronic arts [] distributor: ea africa [011] 516-8300
price: R 499 [] genre: real time strategy [] internet: www.eagames.com
platforms: ps2 | xbox

reviewer: Adam "Madman" Liebman

ps2 review:



The Aliens Vs. Predator franchise is undoubtedly one of the most popular, and successful, gaming properties around, though its presence has been conspicuously lacking on the console front. In an attempt to right this, Electronic Arts & Zono have created Extinction, a console-exclusive strategy title, but can it succeed where countless others have failed?

Real-time strategy games on consoles have an unshakeable stigma attached to them, at least from my point of view. There's no argument that the genre is better suited to the PC, but developers have persisted in trying to create RTS titles on consoles, often resulting in terrible failures. Thus, I admittedly didn't expect too much



from Aliens Vs. Predator: Extinction. The concept is much the same as any other game set in the AvP universe: you choose to control either

Aliens, Predators, or Humans, and your objective is to annihilate anything belonging to one of the other two species.

Firstly, I must stress that AvP: Extinction is not the sort of RTS that most gamers are accustomed to - the emphasis is set squarely on unit management, with absolutely no base building involved, and resource gathering is generally accomplished by killing off your foes. Each race has a base unit used for purchasing upgrades and producing new units - the Humans' Comm-tech, the Aliens' Queen, and the Predators' Shrine. For Humans and Predators, new units are dropped off from space, while the Aliens hatch from eggs laid by the Queen. On the whole, the game dynamic is fairly sound, though I did find the process of creating new Alien units to

be overly complex at first, but once used to it, it shouldn't prove to be too much of a problem. The control scheme is fully customisable, and works well, however the inaccuracy of the analog sticks can make unit selection tedious at times. Other than that, though, the set-up works well enough to make AvP: Extinction quite easily playable, once you become accustomed to it. Sadly, although the animations are well done, Extinction is undoubtedly lacking when it comes to graphics. The landscapes are bleak and dull, and the units aren't very well detailed. Nonetheless, AvP: Extinction is an enjoyable title, particularly for fans of the movies, although the total of only 21 different missions does make the experience rather short-lived. For those who are merely looking for a reasonable RTS title, Extinction is probably the best available on a console, though I'm still convinced the genre belongs solely to the PC.

- ⊕ Faithful recreation of the franchise
- ⊕ Probably the best console RTS around
- ⊖ Short lived
- ⊖ Poor graphics

63

pc review:

▶ The Second World War certainly is hot gaming property these days, with a huge number of first person shooters and tactical games finding their basis in the biggest conflict ever experienced. But here's a first - a CRPG set in that era. Now THAT'S original... really...

The decision to base a CRPG in the World War 2 era is quite strange, to say the least - a fantasy setting,



certainly. Science fiction, sure, why not? But putting the player in control of a person living through WWII is a rather weird move - which makes it really original, if you think about it.

But there is far more to a CRPG than originality. Perhaps the most important aspect of this kind of game is the story and, while it is unexceptional in other areas, has a rather good story. There are even a number of laughs to be had, which is rather strange considering the setting,

but a lot of the humour seems a bit forced. The game doesn't look too bad, but there are bigger problems than mediocre graphics and voice acting. Another War has a somewhat annoying control system, and the difficult nature of the game combined with this means a lot of unnecessary frustration. Had the system been simpler and more fluid, the game would have certainly performed a lot better in this review.

One major plus that Another War has going for it is that it is long. The game is held on four CDs, and will keep the player busy for a good long while - if the player can get past the frustration inspired by the slightly dodgy

controls.

It is not the worst CRPG ever to hit the market, and fans of titles like Fallout may quite enjoy it. But don't go into this one expecting too much, as you will more than likely be disappointed in that case.



- ⊕ Interesting setting
- ⊕ Good story
- ⊗ Dodgy controls
- ⊗ Mediocre

58

pc review:

▶ Why are people still making games like this? In fact, how is it that it got picked up by a publisher? The mind boggles. For this title may have been deemed decent about fifteen years ago!

Knights of the Cross is a turn-based strategy game, a genre that is rare these days, and which seldom



produces a game of sufficient quality to meet today's demands. Knights of the Cross is based on the Battle of Grunwald, a historic skirmish between the Teutonic Knights and the newly formed Polish nation around the year 1400, and is very firmly rooted in the historical - too firmly, in fact. The game dynamic, to put it bluntly, is boring. The graphics look dated, the sound is uninspired

(and "features" extremely cheesy, badly done "German" and "Polish" accents in the mission briefings); the game itself is not huge, and yet it still somehow manages to suck system resources, despite the stated system requirements, which are quite low. In fact, it runs terribly. Incidentally, an uninstaller is not included, and so must be manually removed - even removal via the Control Panel is not available.

The manual mentions that the campaigns contain over 40 scenarios, which in total provide around 60 hours of playing time. I cannot imagine surviving such an endeavour! I found that more than ten minutes of this

dismal drag at a time would get me craving a book, or perhaps a nap - anything, rather than carrying on. Even the packaging is uninspired and unattractive looking, coming across as a very old cheap budget title. The back cover boldly proclaims "no retreat, no mercy, no prisoners" - I say "no more!" As a school computer programming project this game may have passed muster (although I'm quite certain that marks usually get awarded for efficient code, which this game doesn't appear to possess in any form).

Knights of the Cross is a game to look out for - in order to avoid it! Often, mediocre games don't even make it into a review with us, but this one is so bad that we must warn readers away from it. If you are bored and have money to burn, get pulled over for speeding or something - it'll be more fun. Steer well clear of this one!

- ⊕ Quite challenging
- ⊗ Boring
- ⊗ Technically backward
- ⊗ Poorly coded

20

ps2 review:



As part of a shadowy organisation, the mysterious half-vampire Blood Rayne has to do battle against the Cthuloid horrors of a terrifying world. But for all the blood and gore, the title certainly lacks meat...

Blood Rayne is a game that promises a lot, but fails to deliver in a few areas. As Ms Rayne, the player is



expected to size up against some pretty nasty foes, armed with guns, hands, feet and some pretty wicked blades. The game itself has a nice enough principle, but the execution of the title leaves a bit to be desired. In terms of atmosphere, the developers managed to achieve what they were after - the world of this game is dark and dreary, musty and rotting... a lot like many of the enemies you have to face up to.

Spanning a wide variety of mission types and locations, Blood Rayne none the less gets tired rather quickly. The controls are limited on the PS2, making for rather repetitive action. Still, the game is fun, and more than a little gory - seeing as how the best way to regain lost health is by feeding on your enemies.

While the overall sound in the game lacks a certain "oomph", the real disappointment comes out in the graphics. Sure, the PS2 is not the most powerful machine in graphic terms, but there are times when it seems that Blood Rayne belongs on the PS One. Blood Rayne has cult classic written all over it. While most players will not really get into

it in any way, there will be a few that swear by it. It's one that is best to try before you fork out the cash to buy it, when all is said and done. While there are certain elements within the title that rate quite well, the overall package is little more than mediocre.



- ⊕ Nice setting
- ⊕ Interesting story
- ⊗ Poor graphics
- ⊗ Lacks substance

55

ps2 review:

zone of enders: the 2nd runner

It's difficult being a one man army... for one thing, there are all those flanking positions you need to worry about. Then again, if you are going to be a one man army, it's quite possible to achieve victory, should you have the right equipment - like Jehoty, a state of the art air-frame mecha...

Zone of Enders: The 2nd Runner may seem like a strange name for a PS2 title but, when you take a deeper look at the game, you realise that the name makes perfect sense in its almost nonsensical nature.

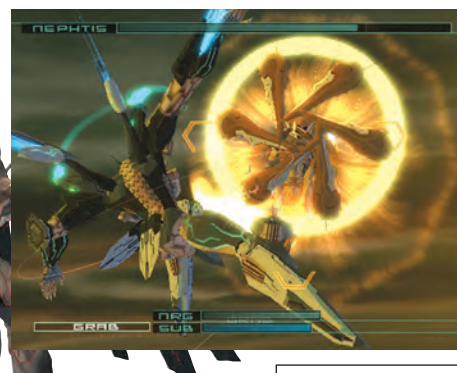


Why? Well, we've all seen anime movies with strange titles and, to be dead honest, this game is pretty much an anime movie with interactive bits. That said, Zone of Enders: The 2nd Runner is great fun. Basically the game is made up of a bunch of high action combat sections interspersed with a rather fun and gripping anime style story. Great animation melds with great graphics as the player takes control of Jehoty, a powerful airframe mecha capable of taking on a vast number of enemies.

Being that the game is so inspired by anime, it is understandably over the top. Huge explosions and absolute throngs of enemies are the order of the day in this action packed title. The controls do take a bit of getting used to, and the story is understandably weird... but Zone of Enders: The 2nd Runner is a very worthwhile game. On the downside, the action can get more than a little repetitive, but the game is so action

packed that the monotony of the titles sometimes goes unnoticed.

It is a frantic and fun title that will be especially pleasing to anime fans.



- ⊕ Great fun
- ⊕ Interesting story
- ⊗ Can get monotonous
- ⊗ Jehoty is a dumb name for a weapon...

79



XPERIENCE A NEW BREED OF PC



COREX

IT DISTRIBUTION DYNAMICS (Pty)Ltd

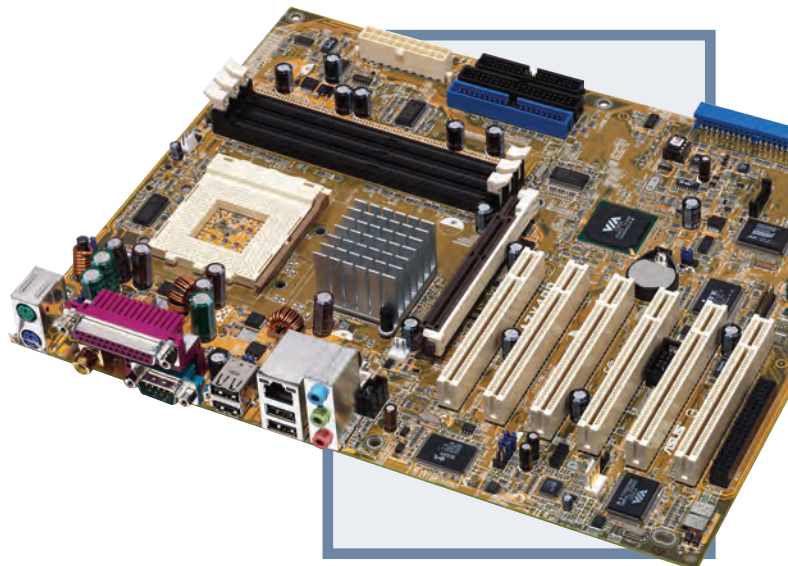
STOCKISTS OF



TEL: 011 707 5000
WEB: WWW.COREX.CO.ZA
FAX: 011 707 5050

ASUS Wireless Technology

ASUS once again push the boundaries of board design by shipping their latest motherboard range with wireless expansion slots; wireless is definitely become a mainstream product with rapidly descending prices and increased performance. Wireless is the future in home networking and I'm glad to see ASUS embrace it.



I managed to get my hands on two VIA KT600 ASUS A7V600 (supporting the latest AMD Barton CPU's) motherboards with wireless cards running at 11mbps (802.11b) - this may not seem that quick but its perfect for sharing an internet connection and online gaming. Corex also supplied a state of the art ASUS 54mbps (802.11g) wireless PCI card which also happened to have Bluetooth support. Installation of the on-board wireless cards was a breeze, with a custom made slot that doesn't sacrifice any usual slots although it will be a cosy fit on a fully populated motherboard. ASUS ship the Wi-Fi cards with their own software and this is where ASUS shine, for the price of a normal wireless card they included a software access point so that you can use a machine as a wireless base station saving the normal expensive cost of buying a wireless access point. Once you have installed the card all that's left to do is screw on the aerial and load the wireless card driver.

Software installation was easy enough but configuring wireless connections took me longer than I thought it would; enabling WEP (wireless encryption) which is essential in a business environment, became a trial and error situation, I totally abandoned it until I had read the manual properly. Once I got the wireless cards to see each other I was quite surprised by the performance. LAN gaming is more than acceptable with pings in the 20-40 range with three workstations using one access point, performance with the 54mbps card must be stellar but unfortunately I only had one card and couldn't test it to its full potential, but its gaming and file copying performance should be a lot better.

Range was also impressive with the cards running at about 80% signal strength while going through roughly three to four walls and covering about 15m in distance. Line of sight distance is roughly about 300m, I managed to connect at 40%-50% signal strength to my neighbours PC roughly 180m

away and share my ADSL connection, reliability was pretty good with very few retries, and the bandwidth varied between 2mbps - 11mbps but provided a stable connection. ASUS software AP also supports other wireless devices and cards and worked fine with my laptops wireless card, making this a very viable and cheap networking solution as well as saving on lots of trips into your ceiling to pull cabling.

I only wish this solution was available before I ran 100mbps Ethernet to all the rooms in my house (cables are not pretty). Wireless is the way of the future and definitely fits in with the propagation of high speed internet to our homes. Bluetooth was also available on the wireless PCI card but unfortunately I didn't have any Bluetooth products to use with it; a friend who has a Bluetooth mobile phone kept picking up a signal from it at roughly 8m-10m away so in principle this is the perfect PDA synchronising device. I think that ASUS have a winner on their hands as Wi-Fi becomes more popular, coupled with good pricing I can thoroughly recommend it to anyone looking to set up a home network without the fuss of cabling.

The following ASUS boards have Wi-Fi slots:

P4C800 Deluxe, P4C800, P4C800-E, P4P800 Deluxe, P4P800, P4P8X, P4P800S, P4P800S-E, P4S800, P4S800D, P4V800D, A7V600, K8V and the coming models.
OS Support for Wi-Fi - 98se ME Win2000 & XP
Wireless Software AP - Windows XP only

REVIEWED BY

Brett "KnightMare" Hamilton

PLUS

Price
Performance
No wiring required

MINUS

ASUS only solution
I hate WEP
Software AP Windows XP only

SUPPLIED BY: Corex IT [011] 707 5000

PRICE: R1170

INTERNET: www.asus.com

Mustek DV2000 Cam Corder

The old adage of "you get what you pay for" is probably not completely misaimed when directed at this product. The DV2000 is one of the cheapest digital cameras on the market and, as such, certainly is not the best. However, this is a feature rich unit, and its performance may surprise you - especially when you consider the price.

Measuring a scant 86 x 40 x 68mm and weighing in at 110 grams (without the two AA batteries needed to power it) the DV2000 is a strong contender for being the smallest camera of its type. The combination of size and price should go a long way to sinking this product, but, as previously stated, it has a few surprises inside its matt silver body.

The camera does not feel very sturdy, and here's betting that a good knock or a fall may do some serious damage. The top mounted buttons especially seem a bit flimsy. Constructed of silver plastic, the DV2000 looks like most modern video recorders, albeit a lot smaller. A 1.5" TFT LCD screen is mounted in a fold out viewer (the only view finder this unit offers) under which the bulk of the camera's controls are situated.

These controls were found to be sluggish and unresponsive - you really need to press them hard to get them to do anything at all. However, they do cover a wide variety of functions, including all the settings for the camera's still and video modes. As far as the still photographs go, the camera is capable of shooting images ranging from a low 640 x 480 resolution right up to 1280 x 960 - or 1600 x 1200 with hardware interpolation - a fairly good spread. The video side of things is a bit slacker, with a capability of only 320 x 240. The camera comes with a memory card (which is needed for operation) and can also serve as a handy mass storage device.

A fixed 10.84mm lens (which is around the equivalent to a 50mm lens for a 35mm SLR camera) gives a focal range of 0.7m right through to a claimed infinity. Combined with a 1/15 to 1/4000 shutter speed and a 2x zoom facility, the camera should perform very well, on paper at least.

On the whole, the DV2000 did not perform too poorly at all. In still mode its pictures were clear (while not exactly print quality). Certainly, they were good enough for quick snaps and non-professional use. The video mode also performed quite well, although the low resolution did cause some disappointment.

The DV2000's biggest problem is the fact that it

does not have a flash, and doesn't like low-light conditions at all. Even fairly bright electric light disagrees with the camera, resulting in very grainy, red recordings. The small, integrated microphone may not be studio quality, but it does capture sound fairly well.

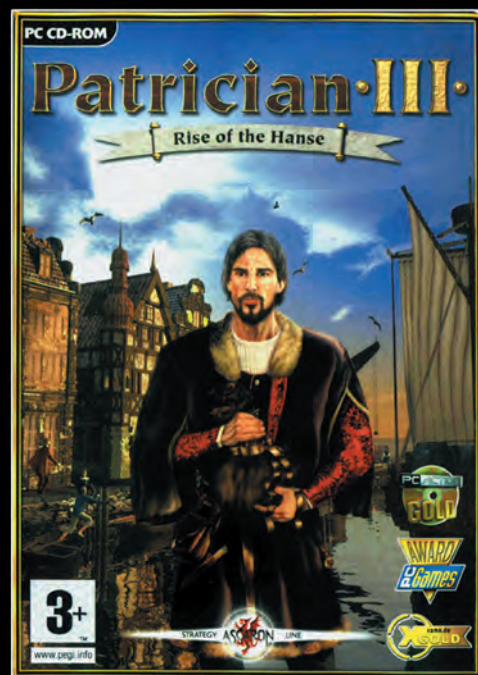
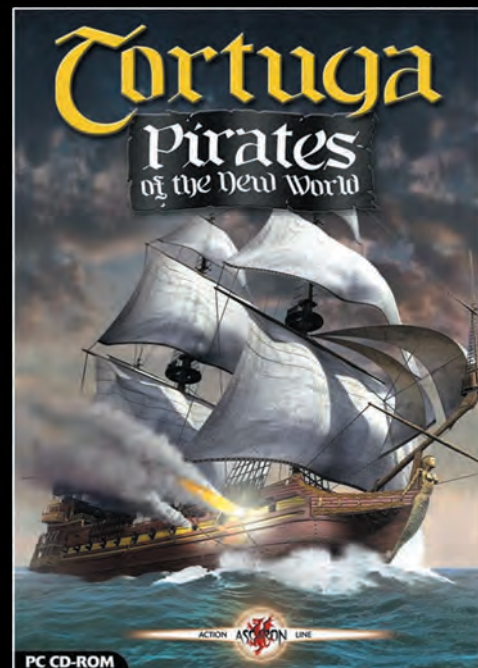
Connecting to the PC with a USB cable, the camera comes with a decent software bundle and easy to use programs. The camera can also be connected directly to a TV or VCR.

Overall, this camera is a great buy for someone who isn't pursuing a serious photographic career. It's a fun item, as long as you don't expect too much from it, and as long as you use it with good light... like bright sunlight.



REVIEWED BY	
Walt "Shryke" Pretorius	
PLUS	MINUS
Small	Quality issues
Cheap	Low resolution videos
Versatile	

SUPPLIED BY: World Computer Systems [011] 823 2002
 PRICE: R1299
 INTERNET: www.wcs.co.za



Distributed Exclusively by World Web Entertainment
 Tel: 011 4620150 www.ww.e.co.za email: sales@ww.e.co.za
 All rights and trademarks and logos are copyright of their respective owners

GET READY TO PLAY...



imagnet
The Gamer's ISP

If you are hungry for a
cleaner and faster ping...



...then we urge you to
come and take a bite
out of Imagnet ISDN



64k ISDN
only R119 p/m

Imagnet ISDN gives you low ping,
low ping gives you more frags.

www.imagnet.co.za

086 111 1101 ★ info@imagnet.co.za

MS Wireless Intellimouse Explorer

Gimmicky or a new move for the mouse? Hell, we've stuck with Microsoft as they introduced the scroll wheel and ergonomic designs. Okay, there are those annoying alternative F keys, but you can't be perfect...

Microsoft's new Intellimouse Explorer is pretty much identical to the former version, but thanks to their new tilt wheel technology a new version is inevitable. That, and it's about time that a new version is on the market.

Thankfully Microsoft shares the foresight of top-range peripheral developers by when they release new iterations of their ranges, they add a little more than a small tweak here and there. The new Explorer got its nips and tucks with the new tilt wheel, which allows for sideways scrolling using the mouse wheel - something you'll see

in most of their new mice. While the tilt wheel is a great idea bound to take off, I didn't find a single game (including Halo) that actually uses it. But never say never. Besides, if the world of untamed spreadsheets is your frontier...

The wheel itself is also improved, not using the click-method anymore and instead giving a smooth scroll. I found this to be a bit of a dual-edged sword because while it is much more comfortable to scroll on the new wheel (and it detects when you make large jumps, thus accelerating the speed down the page as you roll the wheel) it's far more sensitive - not a problem when you scroll through text, but bound to deliver a few surprises when you

are going for the rocket launcher and you pull out your trusty spoon instead.

The feel is more ergonomic, but it's not ambidextrous (though Microsoft's people assured us there is a version for left-handed folk as well). The battery life has also been extended to 6 months on two pen light batteries (or 3 months on one). There are no plans for a rechargeable version, something Microsoft might be taking a gamble on since the other major developers are all going this route, but the company insists it wastes more time than anything else, quoting figures of how much work time is lost waiting for rechargeable to do their thing. Yet they still ship Windows with Solitaire!

Since it's a wireless mouse, it's still heavier and slower than a corded version, which makes it less than ideal for gaming. The chorded version is nice, though, and it has two additional buttons by your thumb, as per the original Intellimouse Explorer design. It's not that big a move, and unless you want the tilt wheel there's little reason to give up your current Explorer for the new one. That said, it is a cool mouse, and you can get it in several designs and colours if you really want something different looking.



REVIEWED BY

James "Priest" Francis

PLUS

New tilt wheel
Better ergonomic design
Better battery life

MINUS

Very sensitive mouse wheel
Not ambidextrous

SUPPLIED BY: Microsoft [0860] 225 567

PRICE: R999 (including Microsoft Wireless Desktop Elite Keyboard)

INTERNET: www.microsoft.com

HP DVD Movie Writer DC3000

Point-and-click comfortable DVD movie creation? Say it isn't so! Yes, now anyone can record their holiday videos to DVD to torment even more people with. Isn't digital grand?

Permit me to explain the concept of home videos to you. Footage taken on your holiday may seem very exciting to you, because you were actually there. Aunt Maureen's comment about the baboon as it sat on the branch scratching its ear must have been hilarious, but in that 'you had to be there' context. Home videos don't mean that you are 'there'. No, we are trapped 'here', looking at stuff you shot over 'there', for reasons you and the Cosmos alone know. And why you think we'd want to watch your creations not even the Cosmos can comprehend. But obviously giant industry is behind this trend, since HP's new Movie DVD writer not only allows you to write your analogue movies to DVD, but it makes it so damned easy as well.

Over here at NAG we initially thought that it was a handy DVD writer that would allow us to back up all our useful files we dare not live without, like the hi-res Matrix Revolution trailer. But the writer is meant purely for movie creation. It has S-Video, Composite Video and Stereo audio inputs, and hooks into your PC via USB 2.0 (nothing less). This means you can feed your VHS or video camera into the player, edit and perfect the

footage on your PC using the neat software bundle supplied with, and then record it to DVD. You are also able to edit video, photos, music and data applications, plus write and read CD-R and CD-RW discs as well as DVD+R/+RW.

It's not the fastest recorder out there, and the lack of a direct DV input means digital camera owners will have to find another way to immortalize their projects. It also has re-write capabilities.

Overall, it's a decent burner, the only downside being its speed - other burners have much better read/write performance. But the sheer ease with which you can make your own movies makes it great for anyone into making their own productions to torture family and friends with.



REVIEWED BY

James "Priest" Francis

PLUS

Easy to use
Direct input from camera
Sleek design

MINUS

Slow burner
No DV input

SUPPLIER: Axiz [011] 237 7050

PRICE: R2999.00

WEBSITE: www.axiz.co.za

Dual Play 64MB MP3 Unit

MP3s wherever you go? Even in your car? And your tape deck? Really? Well, it's about time.

In fact, it's a bit late. The idea is pretty simple - the player looks like a cassette tape and when you pop it into a tape deck, it will act like a tape, using the tape's head and the wonder of digital music to play your MP3s. In short, if you have a nice MP3 collection, but only a tape deck in your car, then this is ideal.

The problem comes into the price. This player sets you back around R 1,500. Firstly for a player that is far too expensive when you can pick up a decent 128 MB player for less than a grand. And you can pick up a decent CD-front loader for your car, capable of playing MP3s for between R 1,500 and R 2,000. Considering that a CD is around 700 MB in size, that's a major difference.

The player supports WMA and MP3, but neither AAC nor Ogg. I can understand one being skipped, but not both. The sound quality is good and the unit has a pouch to clip to a belt, but it has no digital display, no shuffle features and no equalizer or a function to delete songs directly on the player. You can encode songs directly to the player, but this makes no sense - why would I compress songs over an analogue cable when

doing it on a PC will guarantee you better quality. Even worse, while

other players simply become removable drives when you plug them in via USB, this player insists on using its own software. The fact that the software was not originally English, makes things tougher and don't even bother visiting the official product website in hope for firmware updates.

The idea is good, but it's too little too late. For its price it's too small and too lacking in features for a player, and as a tape emulator it's far too pricey as well. If you really want MP3s in your car, get a front loader instead. Or buy a USB Player with an audio-out to run into your car stereo.



REVIEWED BY

James "Priest" Francis

PLUS

Novel idea
Will play in a car tape deck

MINUS

Redundant
Lacks features
Only 64MB

SUPPLIED BY: World Computer Systems [011] 823 2002

PRICE: R1499

INTERNET: www.wcs.co.za



Koch
DISTRIBUTION



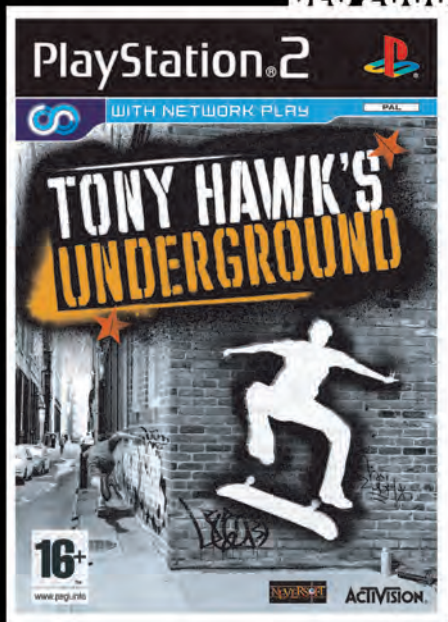
techland

Distributed Exclusively by World Web Entertainment
Tel: 011 4620150 www.ww.e.co.za email: sales@ww.e.co.za
All rights and trademarks and logos are copyright of their respective owners

GET READY TO PLAY...

PlayStation 2

*DEC 2003



*DEC 2003

PlayStation 2

STEREOKINECOR
HOME ENTERTAINMENT

"PS", "PlayStation", "PSone", "Playstation" and "Playstation 2" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment. All Rights Reserved. "Live in Your world. Play in ours." is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment. All product titles, publisher names, trademarks, artwork and associated imagery are trademarks and / or copyright material of their respective owners. © 2001 Stereokinekor Home Entertainment. This artwork remains the sole property of SKHE, and may only be used with their express permission.
*dates subject to changes

Microsoft Wireless Desktop Elite Keyboard



I'll declare my outright bias for Microsoft's hardware yet again, but I always seem to do this. Thankfully, unlike a lot of the other aspects of the Redmond Software giant's business, most people actually agree with that: Microsoft makes good hardware.

Despite the sad demise of their Sidewinder series - something that still has me reeling a bit - the company is placing even more focus on their highly successful mouse and keyboard ranges. The most recent addition to their technology family is the tilt wheel mouse, which allows the scroll wheel to fall sideways. But as is the way of not only Microsoft, but most hardware developers, one new innovation demands a whole new range.

The Desktop Elite Keyboard represents the top echelons of the new range. With the exception that it's not Natural, it has all the things that Microsoft has introduced in their former keyboards (multimedia controls, enhanced F keys, various shortcut keys) and added the new technology as well. Taking a leaf from their Office keyboard, they

built the tilt-wheel into the keyboard. This doesn't replace the mouse wheel but instead gives you another means to quickly scroll down a page. The Back and Forward buttons are the most useful, though, since I don't have to hit Backspace of Shift + Backspace anymore. Sadly, the mouse wheel doesn't click - a stupid oversight considering you can use it to swap between applications. The developers also added 5 shortcut keys at the top that you can set to open anything on your machine (even folders if you simply provide the path alone). And they are hideously simple to set up! While this is great, I'd rather they'd have made them smaller and added five more buttons, since the current lot is just not enough (let's face it - how many icons reside on your Quick Launch bar?) But the feature that gets the most interest out of passer-bys has to be the padded hand-rest, covered in synthetic leather. Even though this is the part of the keyboard that will fall apart first (considering the rest is plastic) it is very comfortable and just really damn nice - something I hope they plan to introduce in all of their future hardware.

The Desktop Elite is a fine keyboard, but more expensive than the standard range. It squeals quality, though, and if you are picky about your typing space, you should really consider it.

REVIEWED BY	
James "Priest" Francis	
PLUS	MINUS
Built in scroll wheel	Only 5 shortcut buttons
Simple shortcut buttons	Scroll wheel doesn't click
Padded wrist rest	Not a natural

SUPPLIED BY: Microsoft [0860] 225 567
PRICE: R999 (including MS Wireless Intellimouse Explorer)
INTERNET: www.microsoft.com

D-Link TV Tuner

In a perfect world, my machine can dispense coffee and allow me to watch TV. While the first is probably still a while away (but I have a feeling someone is working on it for the good of humanity), watching TV on your PC has been possible for several years now.

D-Link's TV tuner, though, is a better indication of things to come. Thanks to USB 2, the unit is external, instead of yet another card clogging up your PC's internals. It also means that you can put it out of the way, along with the cables that plug into it from your receiver. Lastly, it gets rid of needing to interface the card with your sound card (though several internal models do that already). The software provided is really nice, and the unit is also compatible with 3rd party software such as Chris TV, allowing for mosaic channel surfing, recording and so on. The supplied software does all this as well, just in case you don't want to use anything else. The only real catch is the USB 2 specification. The tuner still works without this, but the output is very slow and choppy, plus the reception isn't great. It scans quite faster than

most tuner cards, and I found that tweaking the frequencies is really simple, but once again that's a software issue.

You can get cheaper options, and they will probably give you the same performance. But the D-Link Tuner is reliable and it looks good, plus it supports all the standard inputs such as Composite, Analogue (standard antenna) and RCA. I wasn't really convinced that this is what I need to replace my ageing Video Highway card, but if you are serious about watching and recording shows on your PC, plus all the features you'd find on high-end TVs, give it a look.



REVIEWED BY	
James "Priest" Francis	
PLUS	MINUS
Feature-rich	USB 2 required
Good software	
Looks smart	

SUPPLIED BY: D-Link [012] 665 2165
PRICE: R1599
INTERNET: www.d-link.co.za

XC Cube

AOpen unveils fun, new XC Cube small form factor - Stylish & Compact, XC Cubes Provide Outstanding Performance with Flexible System Configurations & Easy Installation for Everyone.

AOpen, an award-winning leader in PC motherboard and component design and manufacturing, has announced its new small form factor (SFF) product line, the XC Cube Series of bare system PCs. These exciting new entertainment PCs are as well-suited for desktops as they are for coffee tables.

We recognized that the market is ripe for a small box equipped with a lot of options that would appeal to everyday PC users and make a real fashion statement, said Dale Tsai, director, XC Cube product line, AOpen Inc. We've included all the powerful computing essentials in a stylish, tight little package, enabling users to accomplish their day-to-day PC tasks, yet empowering them to freely enjoy the entertainment features that the XC Cube has to offer.

The AOpen XC Cubes feature ultra-silent operation with noise levels below 30dB; highly-efficient thermal solutions to keep temperatures low for optimal performance; a comprehensive roundup of I/O ports; and a power rating of 220 watts.

Initial models of the XC Cube will come in brilliant white, with matching drive bay covers, and soon thereafter will be available in black as well.

Future models of the AOpen XC Cube are slated to be available in various designer colours adaptive to most interior environments. For more information about the XC-Cube Series from AOpen, visit: <http://solution.aopen.com.tw/xc/>



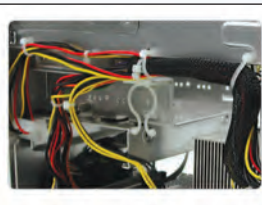
Front access USB, Audio, 1394, SPDIF for easy peripheral usage.



Hand-harmless design ensures 100% safety during assembling.



Hidden FDD, CD/DVD/RW ensures a simple and clean-cut style leading PC-fashion designs.



In-case design allows increased space by sorting each individual cable.



To add more convenience into your life, a unique screw driver-less design ensures Easy-Fasten and Easy-Remove.



Extension functionality so you can purchase AGP/PCI interfaces with standard profiles.



Device case may be taken out completely to create a bigger environment for upgrading.



Mini housing saves you almost 60% of space.



Model	EZ65	
SIZE	WDH (mm)	300(W)x200(D)x185(H)mm
CHIP		Intel865G/ICH5
MEMORY	TYPE	DDR2 (DUAL CH)
	DDR	266/333/400
CPU	TYPE	Socket 478
	FSB	400/533/800
VGA	CHIP	OnDie(8x AGP)
	Port	x1
S.Video		None
PCI		x1
AGP		x1
SOUND	CHIP	AC97 5.1CH
LAN	SPEED	10/100/1000
ATA Connector		ATA100x2
SATA Connector		SATAx2
USB 2.0		2(Rear) / 2(Front)
IEEE1394		1(Rear) / 2(Front) (6/4pins)
CASE	5.25"	1
	3.5"	1
	HDD Bay	1
SPS		220W(w/ 8cmFAN)

H@RDCOR3 CD WRITERS

I remember a couple of years ago when I bought a brand new copy of Windows 95, the entire operating system spanned over 20 odd disks. I also remember when some magazines came with stiffy's attached which had some demo games and utilities. Isn't it funny how simple things were and how little we were satisfied with?

Today I cannot imagine my life without a DVD writer, not even thinking about how it would be without a CD writer. The optical drive revolution has changed a lot in recent years, with prices dropping dramatically for the hardware and consumables, a CD writer is now within reach of almost any computer user. On the downside to this, it seems as if the CD writer has seen the end of its development career, this is due to the speed limitations in its current form. However, looking at the benefits that DVD provides it will only be a matter of time before DVD writers become the standard optical drive.

When thinking of a DVD writer, many people make the mistake to compare it to "just a larger capacity CD writer". The confusing bit comes in when you realise there are three formats available; DVD-R/RW, DVD+R/RW, and DVD-RAM.

DVD+R and DVD+RW

DVD+R and DVD+RW formats are supported by Philips, Sony, Hewlett-Packard, Dell, Ricoh, Yamaha and others. DVD+R is a recordable DVD format similar to CD-R. A

DVD+R can only record data once and then the data becomes permanent on the disc. The disc can not be recorded onto a second time. DVD+RW is a re-recordable format similar to CD-RW. The data on a DVD+RW disc can be erased and recorded over numerous times without damaging the medium. DVDs created by a +R/+RW device can be read by most commercial DVD-ROM players.

DVD-R*, DVD-RW and DVD-RAM

DVD-R*, DVD-RW and DVD-RAM formats are supported by Panasonic, Toshiba, Apple Computer, Hitachi, NEC, Pioneer, Samsung and Sharp. These formats are also supported by the DVD Forum. DVD-R is a recordable DVD format similar to CD-R and DVD+R.

A DVD-R can only record data once and then the data becomes permanent on the disc. There also are two additional standards for DVD-R disks: DVD-RG for general use, and DVD-RA for authoring, which is used for mastering DVD video or data and is not typically available to the general public.

DVD-RW is a re-recordable format similar to CD-RW or DVD+RW. The data on a DVD-RW disc can be erased and recorded over numerous times without damaging the medium.

DVDs created by a -R/-RW device can be read by most commercial DVD-ROM players. DVD-RAM discs can be recorded and erased repeatedly but are only compatible with devices manufactured by the companies that support the DVD-RAM format. DVD-RAM discs are typically housed in cartridges.

*DVD-R is the most compatible format according to www.cdinfo.com.

They ran a monster test where over 1000 combinations of drives, media and DVD-players were tested. Their results: DVD-R=96.74% DVD+R=87.32%

DVD-ROM

DVD-ROM was the first DVD standard to hit the market and is a read-only format. The video or game content is burned onto the DVD once and the DVD will run on any DVD-ROM-equipped device. [Source: www.webopedia.com]

writer: Tom "Fr00tC@k3" Taylor

Test Media

To effectively test the optical drives this month I wanted to use a single media brand throughout. All the DVD writers were tested with Verbatim 4X DVD-R and 4X DVD+R discs. These discs were kindly supplied by Verbatim SA (011) 804 7403. For the CD writers I battled to find a disk which was compatible with all the drives, sadly Verbatim SA only imported 48X media and I wanted to push these drives to their max. I finally used an imported brand called Arita, these discs performed brilliantly and no coaster was created throughout the tests. The Arita 52X CD-R discs were kindly supplied by Sonic Informed (021) 551 8218.

Benchmarking

All the optical drives were tested on the Light Edge supplied test machine and when writing the test data I used Nero Burning ROM 6 Ultra Edition. For the CD-R/RW drives I had 690 MB of test data which I wrote to each disk using the Arita media supplied by Sonic Informed. I ran this test twice to check consistency and then calculated the average of the two times. To determine the CPU usage, Burst Rate, and Random seek times I used Nero CD-DVD Speed version 2.10 to.

The DVD writers required a lot more time to test, using Verbatim media, I wrote 3.69 GB of test data to each disk. I only did this once for each drive but where the drive supports both DVD-R/RW and DVD+R/RW media I used both media types and again calculated the average time between the two. For the CPU usage, Burst Rate, and Random seek times I used Nero DVD Speed version 0.53. In both the DVD writer and CD writer benchmarks I used Nero Info Tool 2.07 to check drive support and buffer memory. All the benchmark tools I used are available as with Nero 6 Ultra Edition and are available as a free download from www.cdspd2000.com. Throughout this roundup I will refer to the drives' specifications as 52X32X52X for example. For both CD and DVD writers this takes the following form: Write speed, Rewrite speed, Read Speed. A fourth number will indicate either DVD-ROM speed or DVD-RAM speed but I will specify this in the review.

**GAMERS DO IT
AT 52X32X52X**

All H@rdcor3 hardware is tested on an Emerald computer supplied by Light Edge Technology:

2GHz Intel Pentium 4 processor
MSI 845PE Max 2 motherboard
Transcend Radeon 9700
Philips 107E 17" monitor
Transcend 1GHz RAM DDR333
Western Digital 80GB HDD 7200rpm
LG DVD/CD-RW combo drive



Format capacities	
CD-R and CD-RW	0.65GB to 0.7GB
DVD-R	3.95GB or 4.7GB
DVD-RW	4.7GB
DVD+R	4.7GB
DVD+RW	4.7GB
DVD-RAM	2.6GB to 9GB

LG GCE-8525B

I have been using an LG optical drive for quite some time now (my test machine sports one) and I have not had any problems. The only coasters that came out of the drive, were those low quality CD-R media. Along with its 52X writing capabilities, this drive also features the new 32X rewriting specification. Bundled with this drive are the usual IDE cable, screws, and basic manual; a copy of Nero Express is also bundled. LG has very quietly introduced AFS (Anti Flutter System) recently, what this does is reduce lower recording quality which is usually caused by irregular vibration. The introduction of AFS simply means that there are now two holes added to the disc tray which aims at reducing the flutter phenomenon. Looking at its performance this drive does not rate badly at all. The estimated retail price might seem high at first but it is only about R30 more expensive than its nearest competitor.



Features 82

Value for Money 82

Performance 88

Pros: 32X CD-RW
Cons: No 32X CD-RW discs available yet
Supplied By: Axiz [011] 237 7000
ERP: R425
Internet: www.lge.com

84

ASUS CRW-5224A

The one feature about ASUS products I have come to appreciate is quality. The unit I received sports the 52X24X52X CD-writing specification and features FlextraSpeed and FlextraLink technologies which auto adjusts the writing speed and prevents buffer under run errors respectively.

What impressed me about this unit is its bundle, not only is an ASUS 52X CD-R disc included but also a 24X Mitsubishi CD-RW disc. The software takes shape in the form of Nero Burning ROM 5 and a very handy little add-on to this package is the inclusion of an emergency eject pin which allows you to open the drive when there is no power to the unit. This drive's performance was not bad, I know I am selfish when I say I expected better results but it would have been nice to see. I was impressed with the CD-RW results it produced and this drive only came second to the Sony CRX230A. Looking at its price vs. performance this drive walks away with the Editors Choice as it offered the best value in the CD-R/RW section of the round up.



Features 84

Value for Money 90

Performance 90

Pros: CD-RW performance | Great price
Cons: Nothing
Supplied By: Corex [011] 707-5000
ERP: R334
Internet: www.asus.com.tw

88

AOpen CRW5224

The AOpen 52X24X52X CD-R/RW is a very interesting optical drive. It comes bundled with two additional face plates for the drive, one is black and the other is silver. This makes a lot of sense and will be welcomed by case modders. A feature I liked about this drive is that by default it is set to a reading speed of 40X, this allows the drive to run much quieter. If you want the drive to read at 52X, you simply need to press and hold the eject button for a couple of seconds and it will be activated. To prevent buffer under run errors, this drive is equipped with JustLink technology and for optimized recording speed it hosts JustSpeed technology. This drive is bundled with Nero Express and a blank 52X AOpen CD-R. Looking at the benchmark results, this drive took a tad longer to the CD-RW than the other drives but its CD-R writing ability made up for that by being the second fastest CD-R/RW drive in this roundup. The estimated retail price of this drive, also second best in this roundup makes this one of the best value drives in this category.



Features 80

Value for Money 89

Performance 87

Pros: CD-R performance | Extra face covers
Cons: CD-RW performance
Supplied By: Rectron [011] 203 1000
ERP: R369
Internet: www.aopen.com

85

Arrgo CWA99D

Arrgo is a fairly new brand to the South African market; even internationally it is fairly new but has proven in a very short time that it can compete with the bigger brands. This drive features 52X24X52X specifications and hosts nifty features such as the Mecha double-suspension technology which allows this drive to handle seriously unbalanced disks while reducing the noise and vibration caused by such a disk. The Arrgo CWA99D also features SuperLink technology which helps to avoid buffer under run errors. Bundled with the drive is Veritas Record Now DX, a software package which is not my first choice, but it should suffice for basic recording needs.

At just under R400 and offering the fastest CD-R writing in this roundup this is a great drive to consider, it all comes down to your budget.



Features 80

Value for Money 89

Performance 90

Pros: Performance
Cons: Bundle
Supplied By: TVR [011] 807-1390
ERP: R399
Internet: www.cis.com.tw

86

LITEON LTC-48161H

I have read many rave reviews about LITEON products, and even in the gaming circles this company has a great reputation. It should be no surprise then to hear that I was very keen on seeing their products in action. The drive Corex submitted was sadly not a 52X model but rather a combo drive with the specs, 48X24X48X CD-RW and 16X DVD-ROM. Don't get me wrong this is a great drive but I would have loved to see their top model in action. This drive sports Mt. Rainier support, Smart-Burn buffer under run prevention technology, Smart-X speed-adjusting technology, and VAS noise and vibration reduction technology. The LITEON LTC-48161H also supports fixed packet, variable packet, raw mode burning and over-burn capabilities. This drive is bundled with Nero Express and Cyberlink Power DVD XP; there is also a blank multi-speed LITEON CD-R included. Performance wise it is not bad and performs competitively against the 52X CD writers. The one thing that kept it back from greatness is it's slightly slower than normal CD-RW speed, but as a CD/DVD combo drive this is a great product.



Features 84

Value for Money 86

Performance 84

Pros: Reads DVDs
Cons: Slow CD-RW
Supplied By: Corex [011] 707-5000
ERP: R550
Internet: www.liteonit.com

84

BTC BCE 5232IM

BTC optical drives are not as popular as what they should be, and you can quote me on that (as long as I get paid royalties). BTC started out in the keyboard business but soon expanded into other sectors of the market. This drive sports 52X32X52 writing capabilities and sadly I was not able to get my hands on 32X rewritable media but this drive performed well in all the other areas, indicating that its 32X rewrite spec is just the cherry on top. It was nice to see that this drive also featured the two extra front panels, also in black and silver, which is a great extra. The software bundle included with this drive is Nero express and looking at the spec-sheet this drive also includes a buffer under run technology which is called MTKSuperLink. Performance wise this drive performed on par. I was a tad disappointed to see its small buffer size but that did not slow it down at all. Its estimated retail price is slightly lower than the Arrgo and its performance very close. Sadly I had to choose one and this one lost it on the buffer size.



Features 79

Value for Money 88

Performance 89

Pros: 32X CD-RW
Cons: Small buffer
Supplied By: Rectron [011] 203 1000
ERP: R395
Internet: www.btc.com.tw

85

Iomega CD-RW external USB 2.0 drive

To my mind Iomega is one of the market leaders when it comes to optical storage. I have been using their products for years and I have been happy since day one. This external drive from Iomega is a fine example of what the company is capable of. Sporting a 48X24X48 CD-RW and 16X DVD-ROM specification this drive is picked up automatically by Windows XP and I was able to immediately open Nero 6 and write a full CD in just over two and a half minutes. I was even more impressed to see that its writing times came very close to the Samsung SM-352. Iomega CD-RW external USB 2.0 drive also features buffer under run technology but neither the manual nor the company's website elaborate much on this. The back of the unit sees two RCA connectors allowing you to connect the unit to your computer sound card or hi-fi. Even though this drive has changed in many ways from the Iomega Predator, I still found it to be a sexy unit and although it is a bit heavy it is still very portable. At first its pricing looks a bit steep, but when you consider it is a portable external drive the price seems justified.



Features 84

Value for Money 82

Performance 87

Pros: External unit | Great performance
Cons: Not a 52X writer
Supplied By: Storgate [011] 695 1600
ERP: R1311
Internet: www.iomega.co.za

84

Samsung SM-352

Almost every gamer I know, owns, or has owned a Samsung optical drive. The reason for this is because these drives are so well priced. Samsung's latest offering is no exception, this drive features 52X24X52X writing ability. Being a combo drive it is also able to read DVD's at 16X. The front panel of this drive is fairly plain and only sports an eject button, volume control, and an earphone socket. What intrigued me though was that the eject button was translucent; this makes for a very interesting optical drive-mod. If you have the skills you can actually place an LED behind this button for a very unique optical drive, be warned though, this WILL void your warranty. The drive ships with a copy of Nero Burning ROM 5.5 and Cyberlink PowerDVD XP. At around about R550 this drive is on par with the other drives in its category and performed very well. I was also impressed to see that this is the only CD writer in this category to feature an 8MB buffer.



Features 82

Value for Money 84

Performance 87

Pros: 8MB buffer | Combo drive
Cons: Bundled CD-R/RW discs would be welcome
Supplied By: Sahara [011] 542 1000
ERP: R549
Internet: www.samsung.com

84

Sony CRX230A

I do not know why but whenever I see a Sony branded product my first impression is "wow, it must be a great product" this is true most of the time and so is the fact that their products are also sometimes more expensive. The Sony CRX230A is no exception to this rule. Although not as great as I would have hoped this drive performed great in the CD-RW test and actually scored the best time. Sadly this 52X32X52X drive took a short while longer to write to a CD-R. The buffer under run technology built into this drive is called Power-Burn and this drive also features a Turbo Boost button. This button allows you to change the read and write speed from the default setting of 40X to 52X by holding the eject button for a couple of seconds. Price-wise this is not the cheapest CD writer in this group test but it does offer great value in terms of performance. If you have a couple rand extra I would recommend this drive.



Features 84

Value for Money 87

Performance 90

Pros: Fastest CD-RW speed
Cons: Price
Supplied By: Light Edge Technology [021] 510 8270
ERP: R425
Internet: www.sony.com

87

BenQ DW400A

This was my first encounter with a BenQ optical drive and because I have reviewed many of this company's other products I had some high expectations for it. There was only one thing about this drive that I did not particularly like, the fact that it only supported the DVD+R standard. It sports the specification 4X4X12X, which is not bad but looking at where the market is headed I do not think that a single technology optical drive is the way to go. The bundle with this drive also impressed me. The fact that it includes InterVideo WinCinema and Nero Express 5.5 was not what caught my attention. It was the fact that this drive came bundled with one DVD+R and one DVD+RW disc, something very few manufacturers do these days but it definitely scored big time in my books. This drive performed fairly well in the write tests but it still only supports one DVD format and I fear this type of drive will soon be obsolete.



Features 79

Value for Money 80

Performance 85

Pros: DVD+R/RW discs included, Price
Cons: Only supports the DVD+ standard
Supplied By: Annex Distribution [011] 542-2300
ERP: R1299
Internet: www.benq.com

81

BTC DRW1004IM

BTC, also known as Behaviour Tech Computer Corp is a very under rated company in South Africa. They are however starting to prove their worth in the optical drive industry by producing great optical drives. The BTC DRW1004IM offers DVD+R/RW writing speeds of 4X2X12X and DVD-R/RW also at 4X2X12X. The drive is bundled with Nero burning ROM 5.5 and a suite of CyberLink titles which include PowerDVD, PowerProducer, and MediaShow. A 2.4X DVD+RW disc also found its way into this bundle. This drive also features buffer under run technology called MTKSuperLink. If I reviewed this product on its own it would have definitely got my vote. Unfortunately I am able to compare it against other drives and with this being the case I think I would much rather consider the ASUS DRW-0402P/D, the main reason being the price.



Features 82

Value for Money 80

Performance 86

Pros: Bundled DVD disc
Cons: Price
Supplied By: Rectron [011] 203 1000
ERP: R1795
Internet: www.btc.com.tw

82

Sony DRU-510A

I don't usually look at product packaging when I review products, but the box in which the Sony DRU-510A is just stunning. This Sony DVD writer supports both DVD+R/RW and DVD-R/RW formats, its specifications are 4X4X12 and 4X2X12X respectively. It is also able to write to CD-R/RW at 24X16X32. The drive features a semi-translucent drive-door which has the respective logos on it with a silver backing. As with the other Sony drive in this roundup it is evident that these drives are more expensive than its competitors, the brand alone would make it worthwhile for many people but at this price I would have liked to see some blank media included. The software disc that ships with the Sony DRU-510A makes up for the lack in media somewhat and on it you will find Veritas RecordNow, DXSonic MyDVD, ShowBiz, Veritas Simple Backup, Cyberlink PowerDVD XP and Musicmatch. Performance-wise this is not the best drive around and for its price I would rather consider one of the Editor's Choice winners, loyal Sony fans will be happy with it though.



Features 85

Value for Money 80

Performance 86

Pros: Sexy unit
Cons: Pricey
Supplied By: Light Edge Technology [021] 510 8270
ERP: R2499
Internet: www.sony.co.za

83

Samsung SR-W04B

The Samsung DVD±R/RW drive supports both DVD formats. This drive performs very well in comparison to the other drives and has a great estimated retail price to boot. This drive's specifications include 4X2.4X for DVD+R/RW, 4X, 2X for DVD-R/RW, and a 16X CD-ROM. Its CD-R/RW lets it down quite substantially and is only able to write or rewrite a blank CD at 10X. I was impressed to see that this drive is bundled with a TDK DVD-R and a DVD+R disc (both rated at 4X). The software package includes Win DVD Creator, Win DVD Recorder, and DVD Copy, and Nero Express 6, it was great to see that version 6 of this great program has made it as a bundled version. Looking at the performance vs. value ratio there is very little to find fault with this drive. I was slightly concerned about the CPU usage of this drive at 1X writing, but it did not seem to pose any problems on the test machine.



Features 82

Value for Money 85

Performance 82

Pros: Price
Cons: No bundled DVD discs
Supplied By: Sahara [011] 542 1000
ERP: R1599
Internet: www.samsung.com

83

Iomega IOM-4212A

This, the latest, Iomega DVD writer is called the Iomega Super DVD, and rightly so. The drive is capable of writing to all of the DVD formats currently available to us, this includes DVD-RAM which it can write at 3X. It's DVD-R/RW and DVD+R/RW writing abilities stand at 4X2X12X and 4X2.4X12X respectively. This drive can also write CD-R/RW discs at 24X16X32X. Another impressive achievement of this drive is its Best of CeBIT America award in the personal hardware category which it received earlier this year. Bundled with this drive is a suite of well known utilities which includes Iomega HotBurn Pro, Iomega Automatic Backup, and Sonic MyDVD. This drive is the perfect all-in-one DVD solution and it performs really well. If you are in the market for a DVD writer do not overlook this one.



Features 90

Value for Money 87

Performance 85

Pros: Supports all DVD formats
Cons: Nothing
Supplied By: Storgate [011] 695 1600
ERP: R2280
Internet: www.iomega.co.za

87

LG GSA-4040B

LG also recently released their Super Multi DVD Writer. Looking a tad sexier than the Iomega offering this drive also supports all the DVD and CD-RW formats. Its writing specifications are 4X2X12X for DVD-R/RW discs, 4X2.4X12X for DVD+R/RW discs and 3X for DVD-RAM discs. Its CD-R/RW writing capabilities are 24X16X32X. The bundle with this drive includes Cyberlink PowerDVD XP, B's Recorder Gold, and neo DVD version 5.0. Another addition to the bundle I really appreciated was the inclusion of a DVD-RAM disc (without cartridge). Even though this drive did not write its DVD's as quickly as the Iomega drive it is a bit cheaper and it includes the DVD-RAM disk. Looking at value for money this drive would definitely be the one. As with the Iomega drive, this one is the perfect all-in-one solution and should not be overlooked.



Features 90

Value for Money 90

Performance 80

Pros: Includes DVD-RAM disc
Cons: Performance lacks slightly
Supplied By: Axiz [011] 237 7000
ERP: R2499
Internet: www.lge.com

86

Pioneer DVR-106D

This drive which was submitted by TVR Computers is an OEM DVD writer. It does not come in a box and is not bundled with any software. This made my review substantially more difficult as I could only comment on its specifications and performance. The Pioneer DVR-106D is able to write to both DVD-R/RW and DVD+R/RW discs at 4X2X12X and 4X2.4X12X respectively and it's CD-R/RW writing speeds are 16X10X32X. One of the biggest benefits to this drive is that it is an original Pioneer optical drive as many other hardware vendors make use of Pioneer hardware in their drives. Its performance was great and I was impressed by the speed at which it wrote a DVD. Sadly though, when looking at its price I would much rather consider the Iomega IOM-4212A or the LG GSA-4040B as they offer the ability to write to DVD-RAM for roughly the same price.



Features 82

Value for Money 70

Performance 87

Pros: Fast DVD writing
Cons: Price
Supplied By: TVR [011] 807-1390
ERP: R2599
Internet: www.lge.com

79

ASUS DRW-0402P/D

As coincidence would have it, I tested this drive straight after I did the Pioneer DVR-106D. What is so significant you may ask? Well the ASUS DRW-0402P/D and the Pioneer DVR-106D are exactly the same optical drive. This is not really a strange occurrence in the hardware industry as many big companies such as ASUS would re-brand drives produced by other companies. This is obviously a big compliment to Pioneer as I doubt that ASUS would put their logo on a second grade product. The offering from ASUS is a bit better though in that it is a boxed solution with bundled software. This drive obviously sports exactly the same specs as its identical twin, the Pioneer, but I preferred this one as its bundle includes a DVD-R disc, a 52X CD-R disc, a copy of Sonic RecordNow, ULEAD DVD MovieFactory 2 SE, and ASUS DVD Player. It also retails for a lot less oddly enough. At the price ASUS sells this product for it is a good buy. It offers great performance and unless you need to write to DVD-RAM this product should keep you happy for a long time.



Features 82

Value for Money 86

Performance 87

Pros: Performance
Cons: Nothing
Supplied By: Corex [011] 707-5000
ERP: R1853
Internet: www.asus.com.tw

85

LITEON SDW-200DX

And again I was amazed... This LITEON drive is not only one of the smallest external drives to grace the presence of my workbench but it is the smallest DVD writer I have seen to date. This tiny optical drive measures a mere 138x24.7x177 mm in size and is able to write to both the DVD-R/RW and DVD+R/RW discs. It also supports compatibility with CD-R/RW drives. Sadly this small drive has one drawback, it is substantially slower than its internal counterparts. Its writing specifications are 2X2X5X for DVD+R/RW and 1X1X5X for DVD-R/RW, its CD-R/RW writing speed is rated at 16X8X24X. Never the less this drive is portable, light weight. The drive comes bundled andwith Cyberlink Power DVD XP and Sonic MyDVD version 4. I was also impressed to see the inclusion of two blank DVD discs. This drive makes use of an eternal power supply and connects to your computer via the USB 2.0 port. Sadly this drive is very expensive. Unless you need a DVD writer for your notebook I cannot see that many people would invest in it until the price.



Features 75

Value for Money 75

Performance 75

Pros: Small
Cons: Price
Supplied By: Corex [011] 707-5000
ERP: R4457
Internet: www.liteon.com

75

BUSlink DVRW412RD

BUSlink is a very new brand to the South African market and one part of my job I enjoy most is to benchmark new products and brands I have not seen before. The BUSlink DVRW412RD is a DVD writer which is compatible with DVD-R/RW and DVD+R/RW. Its specifications are 4X2.4X12X for DVD+R/RW and 4X2X12X for DVD-R/RW. It is also CD-R/RW compatible and sports a 16X10X40X specification. Interestingly enough this drive looks exactly the same as the Samsung SR-W04B, their performance also appears to be similar but their prices not. The drive comes bundled with CyberLink PowerDVD XP and Roxio Easy CD Creator Basic version 6.1 DVD Edition. There is also one blank DVD disc in the box which is great if you want to start backing up data right away. Sadly the estimated retail price of this drive is quite high and again I would much rather consider either the Iomega IOM-4212A or the LG GSA-4040B as they offer support for DVD-RAM at virtually the same price.



Features 82

Value for Money 75

Performance 82

Pros: Bundled DVD discs
Cons: Price
Supplied By: Datashuttle [011] 466 2331
ERP: R2500
Internet: www.buslink.com

79

LITEON LDW-401S

The **LITEON LDW-401S** is one of this company's first DVD writers. Sadly it is able to write to DVD+R/RW and CD-R/RW discs. This drive features specifications of 4X4X12X for DVD+R/RW media and 40X24X40X for CD-R/RW media. Looking at the bundle that came with this drive I was glad to see a DVD+R and DVD+RW disc in the box as well as a copy of Sonic MyDVD and Cyberlink PowerDVD XP. This drive features the Smart-X and Smart-Burn technologies. Smart-X ensures fast data extraction by monitoring and adjusting the read speed of the drive and Smart-Burn is simply buffer under run prevention technology. Looking at the benchmark scores I was impressed to find that this drive achieved the fastest write time. Nonetheless, the one thing which still put me off was the fact that it only supported the DVD+R/RW technology, by now you should know my feelings regarding single technology drives.



Features 79

Value for Money 78

Performance 88

Pros: Performance
Cons: Only supports DVD+R/RW
Supplied By: Corex [011]707-5000
ERP: R1428
Internet: www.liteon.com

81

AOpen DRW4410

Even though this AOpen DVD writer only supports the DVD+R/RW format it is one of the best priced DVD writers around. At about R1300 this drive is affordable to most computer enthusiasts. This drive's DVD+R/RW specifications are as follows: 4X4X8X which allows it to write a DVD in just under 13 minutes, not bad for a drive which retails for about double that of a CD-R/RW and DVD-combo drive. The bundle that ships with this drive is by far the best I have seen in this roundup, not only does it come with a blank DVD+R disc, but also a blank DVD+RW, 52X CD-R, and 12X CD-RW. Its software bundle is also extensive as it sports Nero Burning ROM 5, NeoDVD 4.5, VideoStudio 7, and Cyberlink PowerDVD XP; Value for money does not get better than this. In the back of my mind I still prefer the dual format drives, but this package is hard to resist.



Features 86		Value for Money 86		Performance 80	
Pros:	Great Bundle				84
Cons:	Only writes to DVD + R/RW				
Supplied By:	Rectron [011] 203 1000				
ERP:	R1299				
Internet:	www.btc.com.tw				

CD Writers	Average Record Time (Less is Better)		CPU Usage at 1X Recording (Less is Better)	Random Seek Time (Less is Better)	Burst Rate (More is better)	CD-R Speed	Buffer	Rating	Price
	CD-R	CD-RW							
AOpen CRW5224	2.27	4.10	5%	101 ms	13 MB/s	52X24X52	2MB	87%	R 369
Arrgo CWA99D	2.24	3.34	0%	75 ms	19 MB/s	52X24X52	2MB	86%	R 399
LITEON LTC-48161H	2.38	4.15	2%	87 ms	22 MB/s	48X24X48 16X DVD-ROM	512 KB	84%	R 550
BTC BCE 5232IM	2.31	3.31	0%	88 ms	2 MB/s	52X32X52X	512 KB	85%	R 395
Iomega CD-RW external USB 2.0 drive	2.42	3.44	0%	89 ms	2 MB/s	48X24X48 16X DVD-ROM	2MB	84%	R 1,311
Samsung SM-352	2.47	3.44	0%	96 ms	1 MB/s	52X24X52 16X DVD-ROM	8MB	84%	R 549
LG GCE-8525B	2.28	3.46	0%	101 ms	2 MB/s	52X32X52X	2MB	84%	R 425
ASUS CRW-5224A	2.34	3.3	0%	82 ms	20 MB/s	52X32X52X	2MB	88%	R 334
Sony CRX230A	2.33	3.27	1%	91 ms	21 MB/s	52X32X52X	2MB	87%	R 425

DVD Writers	Average Record Time (Less is Better)	CPU Usage at 1X	Random Seek Time (Less is Better)	Burst Rate (More is better)	DVD+R/RW Rating	DVD-R/RW Rating	DVD-RAM	CD-R/RW	Buffer	Rating	Price
BenQ DW400A	12.47	1%	84 ms	15 MB/s	4X4X12X	N/A	N/A	16X10X40X	8MB	81%	R 1,299
Samsung SR- W04B	12.35	7%	126 ms	23 MB/s	4X2.4X12X	4X2X12X	N/A	16X10X40X	2MB	83%	R 1,599
Iomega IOM- 4212A	12.4	1%	115 ms	10.2 MB/s	4X2.4X12X	4X2X12X	3X	24X16X32X	2MB	87%	R 2,599
LG GSA-4040B	12.55	8%	107ms	12 MB/s	4X2.4X12X	4X2X12X	3X	24X16X32X	2MB	86%	R 2,499
Pioneer DVR- 106D	12.37	7%	143 ms	24 MB/s	4X2X12X	4X2.4X12X	N/A	16X10X32X	2MB	79%	R 2,599
ASUS DRW- 0402P/D	12.39	7%	143 ms	23 MB/s	4X2.4X12X	4X2X12X	N/A	16X10X32X	2MB	85%	R 1,835
LITEON SDW- 200DX	24.25	15%	222 ms	10 MB/s	2X2X5X	1X1X5X	N/A	16X8X24X	8MB	75%	R 4,457
BUSlink DVRW412RD	12.31	7%	191 ms	17 MB/s	4X2.4X12X	4X2X12X	N/A	16X10X40X	2MB	79%	R 2,500
LITEON LDW- 401S	12.25	17%	126 ms	21 MB/s	4X4X12X	N/A	N/A	40X24X40X	2MB	81%	R 1,428
BTC DRW1004IM	12.52	4%	164 ms	20MB/s	4X2X12X	4X2X12X	N/A	40X32X40X	2MB	82%	R 1,795
Sony DRU- 510A	12.5	12%	144 ms	16MB/s	4X4X12X	4X2X12X	N/A	24X16X32X	8MB	83%	R 2,499
AOPEN DRW4410	12.58	14%	200 ms	19MB/s	4X4X8X	N/A	N/A	24X10X40X	2MB	84%	R 1,299

Get pumped!
With the AMD Athlon 64 processor



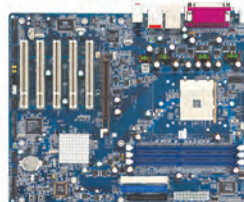
XpC



SN85G4

Shuttle creates, others follow

- AMD Athlon™ 64 (Socket 754) CPUs
- NVIDIA nForce™ 3 150 chipset
- HyperTransport™ technology
- DDR400, 8X AGP
- Serial ATA with RAID (Silicon Image 3512)
- FireWire® 400, USB 2.0, 6-channel audio
- 240W PSU, Integrated Cooling Engine (ICE)



AN50R

Creating a platform for the future

- AMD Athlon™ 64 (Socket 754) CPUs
- NVIDIA nForce™ 3 150 chipset
- HyperTransport™ technology
- DDR400, 8X AGP
- Serial ATA with RAID (Silicon Image 3112)
- FireWire® 400, USB 2.0, 6-channel audio
- Intel® PRO Gigabit Ethernet

software review:

encarta 2004 premium edition

I once recall seeing an article about new technologies. The main photo centrepiece was Bill Gates sitting on a very high pile of paper, and holding a CD in his hand - obviously showing how much better the CD is as a storage medium. Digital technology is great, since it provides you with such a large library of information, and the Encarta series has been at the fore of this movement to provide us with a great source of information.

But a lot has happened in the world since Encarta appeared over a decade ago. Since then the Internet has really taken off in a big way and digital information is much larger and more available than we have ever imagined. All of a sudden this electronic encyclopaedia doesn't seem so big.

I say this with a bit of a heavy heart, because Encarta 2004 is a good program. But it in no way compares to the Internet in itself. Granted, I might be a bit out of the relevant market here - I spend a lot of my working hours online, and gathering information on a topic is pretty easy for me, since I've picked up various shortcuts and

insights over the years pertaining to finding stuff online. But I'm not alone - there are a lot of people who are able to browse online and get the information they need. Encarta does allow you to search for links online, but

the facility isn't even a shade compared to the power behind Google or Altavista. In fact, I generally found the web links in Encarta to be pretty pointless, since they point to far too few sources to be of any real use.

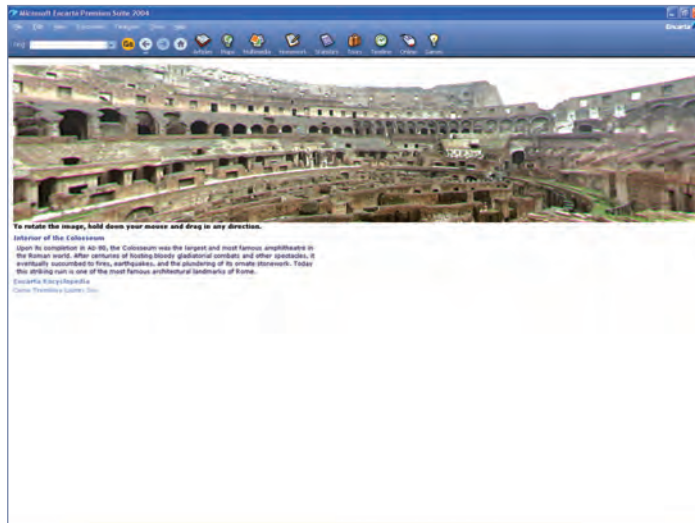
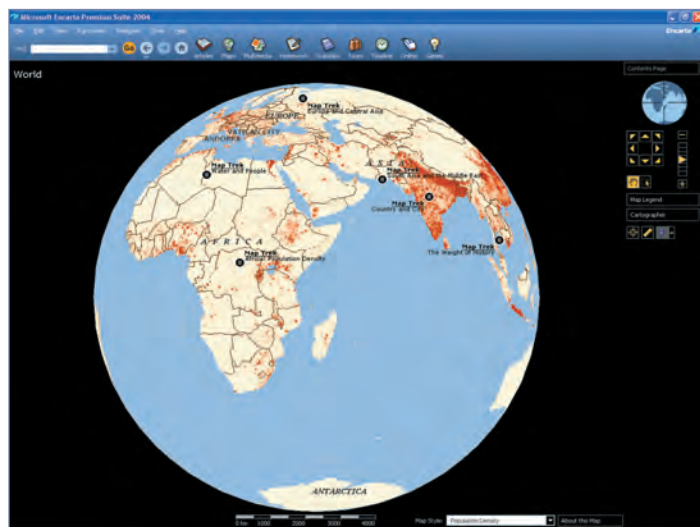
Encarta is still great for the less web-savvy or for children whose parents don't want them to search the web on their own. It's also great for quickly looking up a topic, once you get used to the interface. Despite adding a useful visual browser, Encarta's interface is below par to Microsoft's other problems. For instance, you can't use your cursor keys to scroll through search results (instead, you have to click on them individually). You can't resize the search windows, and the search engine is annoying, nothing scanning topics properly. In one example, to find the topic of Halloween, I had to search for that term. Searching for 'Halloween' did get me a list of topics including John Carpenter's biography and something on US Holidays, but it never even raised the topic I was looking for. This is a pretty dumb oversight, since most people (me included) thought that 'Halloween' was the correct spelling.

There are a few reasons to get Encarta, though. The World Atlas and statistics are great (not to mention far trickier to locate online). Encarta's researcher also integrates with Internet Explorer (but not with the other browsers I tried) and the package gives you a year's free updates of the service. Lastly, the included dictionary that lives in your system tray is useful as well.

Overall, if you are web-savvy enough to use Google.com, the Dictionary.com search bar, CNN.com and you can sort the rubbish from the useful info online, plus you have reliable net access, you don't need Encarta. If you want to buy something for your kids that they'll use a lot, it's a good buy. It's good for projects and a bit safer than unleashing a 10-year old online.

REVIEWED BY	
James "Educated Hack" Francis	
PLUS	MINUS
Extensive topics	No match to online research
Nice visual browser	Interface lacks polish
Good maps and dictionary	

SUPPLIED BY: Comtek [0800] 600 557
PRICE: R 729
INTERNET: www.microsoft.com



Dual

A Dream Comes True for Quality Multimedia Connoisseurs

DRW-0402P/D

DVD DRIVE Dual

DVD+R/RW 4x 2.4x | DVD-R/RW 4x 2x 12x | CD-R/RW 16x 10x 32x



FEATURES

- Multi-Functions: 4x DVD+R/ 2.4x DVD+RW/ 4x DVD-R/ 2x DVD-RW/ 12x DVD-ROM/ 16x CD-R/ 10x CD-RW/ 32x CD-ROM
- Compatible with a wide range of disc formats
- Buffer underrun errors prevention for CD and DVD recording
- Supports PIO Mode 4, Multi Word DMA Mode 2, and Ultra DMA Mode 2
- Low vibration mechanism by DRA system
- Operates on horizontal or vertical mounting
- Unique dust resistance Design
- Supports DAO, TAO, SAO, Packet Write
- Windows 98SE/ME/2000/NT/XP compatible



Sahara
Johannesburg Tel: (+27 11) 542-1000
Port Elizabeth Tel: (+27 41) 365-2911
Cape Town Tel: (+27 21) 551-5595
Durban Tel: (+27 31) 263-1885
<http://www.sahara.co.za>



COREX IT Distribution Dynamics
Tel: 27-11 7075000
Fax: 27-11 7075050
<http://www.corex.co.za>



ASUS South Africa
Office Tel: +27 11 781 4204
General email: jack_chen@asus.com.tw
Technical email: david_hsiao@asus.com.tw
www.asus.com



After an hour's drive you reach the LAN venue. Closer to the venue you spot the LAN arrows, pointing you in the right direction. What a wonderful day, the provided map was correct, the LAN arrows were correct - it's good to be alive! All you need now is to see other gamers, ah there they are, but hey no queues? Is this the right place? A panic attack sets in. Suddenly you are greeted with a firm handshake, and you're introduced to an organiser who asks you how the drive went and if you found the venue directions practical? Next you're being helped to a seat. Next you're being informed of all the rules and regulations - you wish this dream would never end.

This is how your LAN should start.

Organizers and helpers should be at the venue early on the day of your LAN. For the previous LAN you've already set up the hall. Use the time to check your network points if you did not do so already. Set the mood; start some background music, we've always found that the proxy on the big screen with music videos ensures smiling faces.

By now your helpers should be at the reception / payment table. It's recommended that you need at least 2 helpers at the payment table. Please remember to point out to gamers your disclaimer. Ensure the canteen and toilets are clearly marked. Set up an additional table and display the prizes for the day. Remember to put reserved stickers on the booked tables.

The organizer should be visible and if you see someone looking a bit lost please don't go into hiding. Help the gamer! By helping you will keep an even flow of gamers inside the hall. Lost souls stick together :). A difficult gamer - now this is a tough one, what do you do? This guy will find something wrong with everything. Everything you tell him, he will know better. Always be calm and helpful. If you can't solve his problem ask him



if he wants a refund and tell him to attend a future event. This will give him time to sort out his PC or software. Harsh words create a negative atmosphere, something you don't need on your first LAN. Wanderers? These people can be spectators or boy/girlfriends / friends / mother etc. Keep an eye on them.

What if something goes wrong? Yes, something always goes wrong. Keep calm. Make apologies and do fault finding immediately. If it's a power problem ask everyone to turn off their PC's. They'll appreciate the gesture. Solve the problem, test it and then tell all to continue. What if the power still trips? Ask the gamers to plug in their PCs one by one. Sometimes one of those monster PCs gets greedy and eats all the power. Try moving the monster owner to a power supply with fewer gamers connected. What if there's a problem on your network? Try the obvious first. Did he plug in his network point (duh don't laugh, this happens a lot!)? Test the gamer's network card. Test your network cable. Ping the switches, etc. Other problems? Don't make this a big issue; try solving problems within your helper team.

Schedule or no schedule? This is sometimes difficult to stick by. If you're hosting a huge LAN with big prizes and a very strict time line you need a schedule. Further more you need to stick to that schedule. With the smaller fun LANs a schedule is optional. Perhaps stating the planned events on the day but with no time connected could be helpful. Keep prize giving informal for a fun LAN.

Remember in the previous issue we suggested setting up a few extra tables - this is where they come in - for the registered gamer bringing his unregistered blood brother with. Set them up there. Please keep track of all the unregistered ones, you don't want to run out of seats

and turn away the registered gamers.

As soon as you think everyone's seated and comfy, stop the music and give a short (please keep it short) speech. Welcome all to your LAN. State your name; give the names of the helpers and what their fields of expertise will be for the day. Ensure everyone knows (by now) where the canteen and toilets are. Tell the gamers what games will be played and where to find the patches. Make it clear to all that no cheating will be tolerated and that you only support legal software. Depending on your network please ask people not to copy when you're playing a competition. If any, thank your sponsors for their contributions. State the pack up time. Give your planned next LAN date and website address or cell / telephone numbers the gamers can contact for more information.

15 - 20 minutes before your pack up time you need to tell all to finish copying / playing and pack up. Before disconnection ensure all PC's have been turned off. Depending on your loyal friends / helpers all will now be helping you to pack up all the equipment (network cables, switches, power supplies, etc). You will always find a few extra power cables - keep them in a "Lost and Found box" until your next LAN. Gamers find it hard the part from PC spares. :)

After packing up ensure that all windows and doors are locked. Turn off the power / lights. If the venue supplier is still around tell them that you are leaving the premises now.

The next morning you will most probably wake up at 13h00, sore back and hungry like a wolf!

What will your vision be now? Will you continue hosting, despite problems you've had the day before?

Will the LAN support itself, and not be sponsored by you? Did enough gamers show up to make this feasible? Will / was your venue big enough? All these are questions that you need to answer before planning your next LAN.

Whatever your decisions might be, I hope you enjoyed these instalments on hosting a LAN. I wish you all the best with your LANs, keep gaming!

Wolvenoid | frags@mailbox.co.za | www.vc.org.za

Gaming the Organised Chaos way

After repeated requests I think it is time to spell out to the average gamer what they need when they come to an Organised Chaos event.

First and foremost the most obvious thing to bring would be yourselves and your PC's. The recommended specs, for your sheer gaming pleasure and to make sure that you get to play all the games that you want to I would recommend a 1GHz Intel equivalent with 256Mb of RAM and a 32Mb AGP card, just to make sure that you aren't left out in the cold when some of the newer games start to get played. You will also have to have your own network card, though if you don't have one of these let the organizers know and they will be able to get you one at a decent price.

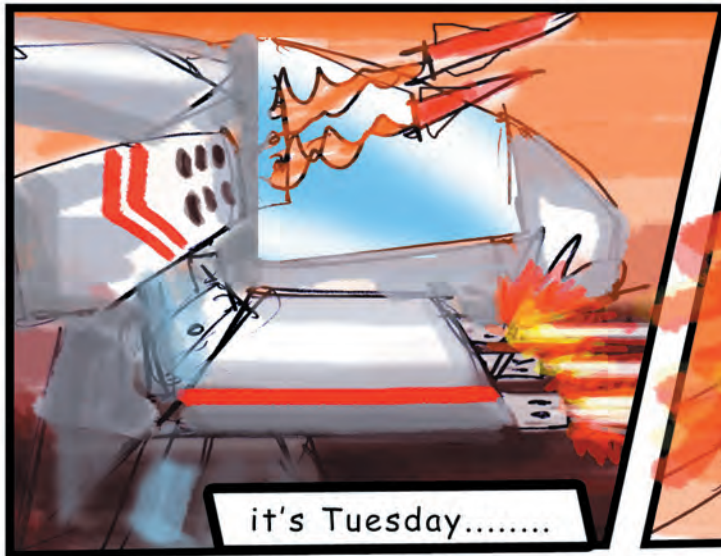
Next of course you will have to bring money. This serves two purposes; one it gets you through the door and two, so you don't die of dehydration and starvation while you are sitting in front of your machine playing like a mad

thing. Your registration fee will get you an IP address as well as entrance into the lucky draw and whatever tournaments are being played that weekend. This amount will be around R80. Because the LAN lasts for close on 45 hours you are going to have to feed yourself - there are several ways of doing this. Food is always on sale at OC events, but if this is not your scene then just down the road within easy walking distance there are several eating establishments including a well known fast food burger chain and a Pizza parlour. All in all you should come prepared with a around R250 and that will see you well enough through the weekend. Then for some of us who can no longer take the whole weekend awake a sleeping bag and pillow are also a must, I would heartily recommend a mattress as well. Unfortunately, one or two cars have been broken into outside the one venue and the organizers have hired a security guard to watch after the cars and this has given peace of mind to everyone, though the dog looks like it

could use a meal or two, maybe that will make him chase after the criminals that much faster. Your possessions inside the LAN are quite safe, and as of yet nothing has been reported stolen to the organizers. This matter is taken seriously and the police will be called if you are caught with your hands in someone else's things. But that is all just doom and gloom and fortunately has never happened.

Organized Chaos is a well organized, smoothly run LAN with fantastic prizes given away on a regular basis. We regularly have people attending from Worcester and Hermanus. So if you live anywhere in the Cape and I mean anywhere, come on by for what is a great weekend of intense gaming and socializing with others in the gaming community.

Sean "KiRoY" Beamish | www.oc.co.za



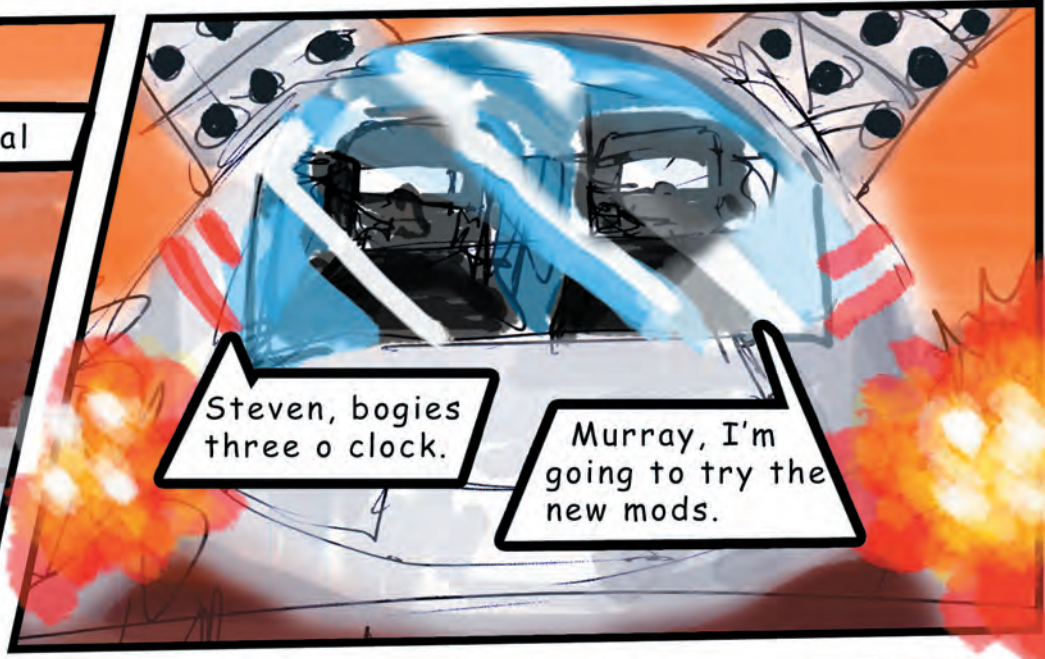
it's Tuesday.....



...just before lunch..



..nothing unusual



Steven, bogies
three o clock.

Murray, I'm
going to try the
new mods.



...just another day of kicking
the competitions butt.

Will Profile Design Technology
ever find their equal? or
will they remain unchallenged.

Gaming Rig Specialists

Want more speed and a case that turns heads?
Profile Design Technology specialises in custom building pc's
and upgrades. We also diagnose and repair.
Call us for a quotation.

Profile Design Technology

For more information contact Murray 082 339 7361 or Steven 072 606 5768 or 011-469-4757

THE NAG 2003

Multiplayer Gaming Awards

by anton lines

WARCRAFT III

Reign of Chaos Player of the Year: Anthony "Juvenile" Fellowes (Nightfall)

Juvenile should also be receiving the "Bruce Willis" award - this man simply refused to die. For a long time, he managed only second and third place finishes, each time losing to his clanmate and nemesis, sWoop. You might think that having the audience chant "Swoop! Swoop!" in the Worfaire final last year, and losing two winner's bracket finals at the Electronic Sports World Cup qualifier, would be enough to break someone. Not so. Juvenile has shown that perseverance indeed pays off, winning World Cyber Games South Africa 2003 and establishing himself as number one in the country.

The Frozen Throne Player of the Year: Chris "sWoop" Barter (Nightfall)

What can one say about sWoop that hasn't already been said? He is the most well-known South African strategy player, with the most experience, the most achievements behind his name, and... the beanie of death! Others have tried to emulate his methods, but none have succeeded. You do not choose the beanie, it seems. The beanie chooses you. After winning the Electronic Sports World Cup qualifier for Reign of Chaos, sWoop recently took first place, and yet another trip overseas, playing The Frozen Throne (WarCraft III's expansion) at rAge.

Most Improved WarCraft III Player: Dean "Survivor" Yeh (Mod)

Survivor started playing WarCraft III last year with Reign of Chaos, but did not compete in any tournaments as he didn't know much about the local community. Recently he discovered there was a South African online server and began playing with the big names, rapidly building up his skill. A friend entered him in World Cyber Games South Africa and he decided to attend. He qualified for the finals and eventually finished top 12. The following month, he participated in the rAge Frozen Throne tournament, causing several upsets and finishing in third place.

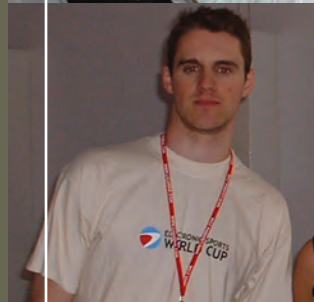
UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2003

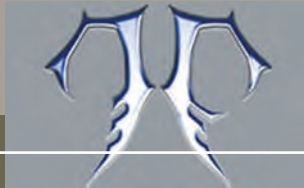
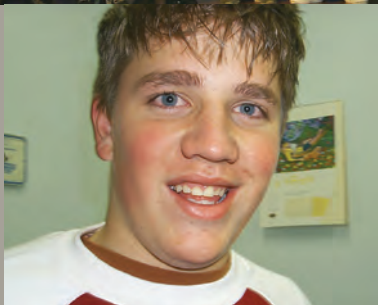
Player of the Year: Nico-Louis "Livid" Joubert and Karl "Mburr" Buys (Team 42)

In this category, picking a single winner of the award is impossible. Livid and Mburr have been neck-and-neck the entire year in UT2003, and continue to be equally matched whenever they play - one can never predict the outcome of a game between the two. They have both represented South Africa in international competitions, and are responsible for Team 42's string of "42 only" tournament finals during 2003. Their UT2K3 achievements are entirely unmatched in South Africa, except by each other.

Most Improved Player: Richard "Gengis" Hart (Naja)

A background player in the past, Gengis made a name for himself very quickly this year at the Cape Town WCG qualifiers - where he finished second by a difference of only one kill. The second place gave him a free trip to Johannesburg for the final event, and he did not waste the opportunity. Finishing third overall, he defeated C@sper|HR| who was seeded second, and only lost to 42::Mburr (the overall winner) 3-5. His nickname has come to be associated with his skill in UT2K3, which is formidable, and I expect him to raise many eyebrows in the future.





Clan of the Year: **Team 42 and Nightfall**

The second award to be shared this year goes to two clans who have thoroughly dominated their respective gaming scenes. Using a points system (4 points for overseas representation, 3 points for a first place, 2 for a second and 1 for a third) the two clans come out dead even on results in 2003 with 26 points each. Team Evolve follow close behind with 19 points.



COUNTER-STRIKE

Team of the Year: **Shuttle Evolve**

There can be no doubt as to the winners of this award. Evolve was formed early this year by former members of Gamers Inc, and with the promise of stable management, they soon attracted the top players in the country. The impressive line-up did not disappoint. Evolve went on to win every local Counter-Strike tournament held in 2003, with the exception of rAge where their first team was in Korea. They have represented their community at both the Electronic Sports World Cup and the World Cyber Games, and have secured a sponsorship from Shuttle, the most comprehensive South African team gaming has seen to date.

Most Improved Team: **Albatron Team Africa**

Coming almost from nowhere, Albatron Team Africa went from 5th in the Western Cape, to 5th in the country at the ESWC qualifier, in a matter of months. I am not often wrong when I make predictions on the outcome of SA gaming events, but they turned my seedings on their head at this year's Cape Town WCG qualifier, beating the first-seeded Hell'z Own team in two remarkable superfinal matches. They then managed a joint third place at the WCG Finals and a fourth place at rAge. This is certainly a team to watch out for.

Most Valuable Player: **Riaan "Style" van Niekerk (Evolve)**

While often finding himself in the shadow of "household" names like Hellhound and Deathsbane, Style's outstanding contribution to his team has become expressly clear this year. Not only has he proven to be an unstoppable aim machine, but he displays a strategic and leadership ability that is rarely found in players twice his age. Style reads the game like a Danielle Steele novel, and directs his team with precision and confidence. His consistency is admirable - whatever the pressure, it does not seem to affect his game. South African Counter-Strike would not be where it is today without the contribution of this remarkable player.

Most Improved Player: **Graham "ReBs" Schwikkard (DC*Ignite)**

ReBs joined the competitive Counter-Strike scene in late 2002 with the formation of DC*Ignite. Having already known him for some years before that, I had the pleasure of being able to watch his ascension from "n00bism" to "1337ness" in the space of a single year. I will always remember an incident from this year's Mayhem Offline League where, after losing a close game, he was simply too happy to be playing at the highest level to be upset about the defeat. He has grown into a true professional and a respected player. (DC*Ignite claimed their first major tournament victory at rAge last month).

Gamer of the Year: **Riaan "Style" van Niekerk**

Out of the many candidates that were shortlisted for this, the most important multiplayer award for 2003, Style was chosen because of his spirit. Always cheerful, always friendly, never a bad sport, this sixteen-year-old Counter-Strike player has gathered the respect and acknowledgement of teammates and opponents from around the world. His skill is feared both locally and internationally, while his personality is welcomed wherever he goes. Through it all, he is also one of the most modest gamers I know - gamers do not often decline an interview.

music reviews:

Reinventing Hell: The Best of Pantera Pantera Gallo

There's not much that can be said about Pantera that hasn't been said already. In fact, this band has been, and will be in the future, one of the finest proponents of heavy metal to ever grace the recording industry. The band has been around for around twenty years (although their fame truly began when Phil Anselmo joined the band fifteen years ago. In 1990 their climb to success began with their official debut album *Cowboys from Hell*. Tracks from all their albums (*Cowboys from Hell*; *Vulgar Display of Power*; *Far Beyond Driven*; *Great Southern Trendkill*; *Live 101 Proof*; *Reinventing the Steel*) as well as two soundtrack tracks from *Heavy Metal 2000* and *the Crow*. There is no better homage to this great band than this album. It is complete and powerful, showcasing the talent of a band that changed the face of heavy metal (for the better) many times over. Fans will adore this collection, which features tracks like *Cemetery Gates*, *Mouth for War*, *Walk, This Love* and *F**king Hostile*. Brilliant stuff indeed!

The Very Best of Cher

Cher
Gallo

If there ever was a grand dame of modern music, it would have to be the statuesque and mysteriously beautiful Cher. And there is no better album to track her career, from her beginnings with Sonny Bono right through to her reinvented (blonde) self - it's all here. This super-sexy siren's voice has always been sultry and warm, as the listener will easily be able to tell, and those who may not be familiar with her earlier works will find this aspect of the album a real treat. An amazing 42 tracks can be found on this double disk album, and songs include *I Got You Babe*, *Heart of Stone*, *Walking in Memphis* and *Strong enough*. This is nice, relaxing listening from one of popular music's longest lasting icons.



Absolution Muse Gallo

I fell in love with Muse the first time I heard them, and devoured both their previous albums with fervour.

However, the third album so often brings "third album blues" to the band concerned, so the true test of this band's prowess was this album - *Absolution*. They have passed with flying colours. Muse bring their brand of off-beat, angsty rock back with this third offering, and push previous limits a little further, making for an exciting and sometimes surprising recording. Matthew Bellamy's voice is still brilliant, the music is still quietly powerful - it's just so much more there than before. Oh, yes, and the really good news is that the band opted for lyrics printed in the CD sleeve this time

round.

If you know the band, grab *Absolution* with both hands. If you don't, this is a great place to start getting acquainted.

4 Whigfield Gallo

Let's be brutally honest here - the world of dance music is incredibly tough, mainly because the market is so fickle.

So, for a band to produce four theoretically successful albums, they must be doing something right. What exactly Whigfield is doing right I don't rightly know...

Basically, the new offering from this band is really a lot like the previous ones - it's beaty and alluring, but it lacks the kind of substance that makes for music that

outlasts the competition.

However, they are back, they have produced four albums and they seem to be going strong. Maybe I am just missing the point...

J23 Danny K Gallo

I am one of those people that loves to hear about South Africans doing well for themselves, even in a smaller scale of national fame (as opposed to international fame.)

The thing that Danny K has going for him is that he was not an Idols winner or finalist - therefore he has a modicum of sense and talent, and didn't need to be handed everything on a platter. On the "against" side, I must admit that this new album is rather full of things I heard around five years ago.

And if anyone accused Mr K of being a Michael

Jackson clone, I would not feel obliged to slap them for being a liar.

The truth be told, Danny K has oodles of talent and ability - he just needs to do something original.

And that in itself, would make him, as a South African musician, almost unique.



www.musica.co.za

CHARTS

1	1	R Kelly	R in R&B
2	10	Bump 13	DJ Costa
3	2	Dido	Life for Rent
4	3	Gareth Gates	Go Your Own Way
5	5	Luther Vandross	Dance with my Father
6	8	Surge	Surge 2003
7	7	Adilah	Adilah
8	9	Cher	Vvery Best of
9	New	Hip Nop Hits II	Various
10	14	Stand Up Vol 2	Various

Legacy: The Absolute Best of the Doors The Doors Gallo

Another greatest hits from Gallo will have music lovers counting out their spare pennies and hot-footing it over to the local music store. *Legacy: The Absolute Best of the Doors* is probably the most definitive collection of works by a band that revolutionised modern music. It doesn't matter what anyone says - this was probably one of the most important musical quartets to ever stride a stage. This double CD is a powerful collection of songs, featuring obvious tracks like *Break on Through*, *Light my Fire*, *The End*, *Riders on the Storm* and *Hello, I Love You*. There are a few surprises (although they certainly belong here) like *The Crystal Ship*, *Peace Frog* and the *Changeling*, as well as a previously unreleased track entitled *Celebration of the Lizard*. Anyone who loves rock and has an ear for nostalgia should get this album. It is a wonderful celebration of a great band. To quote the old line from Mr Morrison himself; "Is everybody in? The ceremony is about to begin..."



PlayStation 2



Also available on PC.

WEAPON OF MASS DESTRUCTION

THAT'D BE YOU

The year is 1991. Armed with an arsenal true to modern day warfare, your squad of four Special Forces operatives will face impossible odds in an attempt to liberate Iraq. **Conflict: Desert Storm II** features more levels, more weapons, smarter enemies and tougher squad mates than its predecessor. So, brace yourself for a mission that has the potential to traumatize you for life.

Selected Stores only.
Buy online @ www.musica.co.za

@
M

play

dvd reviews:



8 Mile
16L | 111 min

Jimmy 'Rabbit' Smith comes from the wrong side of the rail road, but he is an excellent freestyle rapper, and it might be his way out of the slums of Detroit and onto stardom.

James: It's Karate Kid with rappers. But that said, the array of rap talent stops it from being a star vehicle for Eminem, and the solid characters, good dialogue and strong directing takes it a step above Hollywood fluff and into the realms of a far more sincere and serious movie. Well worth watching.

Walt: The thing that makes this



Matrix Reloaded
13V | 132 min

Neo is back to fight the machines that have enslaved humanity. But is being the chosen one enough? Is he even the chosen one? The second movie explores further into the sci-fi world from the original classic.

James: It's the second movie in a trilogy, and as such it expands on the world without answering too many questions. I did find it a bit lackluster, though, and devoid of the energy of the first. Plus, the Zion scenes were mostly redundant. Still, if you liked the first, you ought to see it.

Walt: The problem with this film is that there's too much story and too little time in which it's told. The film feels like a trailer and sports a number of gaps (some of which are made up in Enter the Matrix.) Enjoyable, but disappointing next to the first film.

The Ring
16 | 112 min

When you see the Ring, you die. A journalist investigates several mysterious deaths, all seemingly related to an urban legend of a tape that kills you exactly seven days after watching it.

James: Or 'How to take classic and screw it up'. Modern horror is far too eager to spoon feed why things should



be scary and because of that The Ring isn't. Whereas the Japanese film carried a lot of atmosphere

film so great lies in the fact that it's NOT big - no big problems, no big successes... just a normal guy in fairly normal circumstances. Eminem is quite surprising as an actor, and Kim Bassinger bears mention as his white-trash mother. Overall, a solid and enjoyable movie.

and symbolism, this version insists on telling us what to think when. Plus, they got the whole idea of The Ring wrong. Hunt down and watch Ringu instead.

Walt: Although the film does get rather creepy at times and has a few good scares in it, it's little more than a fancy B-grade horror. The film makers went a long way to capture the essence of the original Japanese film, but not far enough.

National Security
13L | 88 min

Hank (Steve Zahn) gets unfairly sent to prison by Earl (Martin Laurence), and when he is released, he gets a job as a security guard - in the same company that employs Earl. Through circumstances beyond their control the two work together to bust the criminal ring responsible for the death of Hank's partner.

James: This is a fun movie, but it tends to hit and miss the buddy-movie concept along the way. Laurence has more funny moments than usual, and Zahn is a good opposite to his repertoire, but the plot is sub-standard, and Eric Roberts is in his worst villain role ever.

Walt: The problem with this film is Martin Laurence. Sure, he's funny, but he does get a bit much - the movie pales in comparison to titles like Bad Boys. It is fun, though, and the chemistry between Laurence and Steve Zahn is good. The laughs are good, but they are few and far between.

Chicago
13V | 109 min

Based on a popular stage show, Chicago teams up Catherine Zeta Jones, Rene Sellweger and Richard Gere in the story where a chorus girl gets sent to jail for murder, and with the help of her lawyer, hopes to



▲ The "Do a Dumb Dance" bit...

become a star.

James: If you love musicals, great productions and movies that have a general sexiness to them, you must see Chicago. It's a tad over-bearing, but the main stars make it work so well.

Walt: Not really my kind of film, but you have to give credit where credit is due. This film is incredibly well made, and captures the theatrical musical feel almost perfectly. And the fact that Richard Gere can actually sing is a nice added bonus.

The Recruit
10V | 110 min

Nothing is what it seems. Colin Farrell is recruited by trainer Al Pacino into the CIA. During training he is taught that things appear different than they are, and soon he is involved in a plot to uncover a CIA double agent.

James: It's a by-the-numbers Hollywood spy movie with nothing new to offer. Pacino took the money and ran, Farrell is being his normal, un-shaven self and throughout this all you can't help to think that Spy Games was a lot better.

Walt: I actually enjoyed this film. It is very Hollywood, and the plot is quite predictable, but I can't help liking the interplay between Farrell and Pacino. Not as good as other spy films, but it certainly isn't the worst.

RYTHMIC BEAT ♪

For more information mail

sales@nag.co.za

Or

Speak to an actual human

Len Nery on 084 594 9909

96mm x 64mm

[3mm Bleed]

[w] 99mm x [h] 73mm



Used computers bought and sold

Do you have an old PC that's not good for anything other than making a racket and running games in a sub-standard fashion? Do you want to sell this hunk of junk to some sucker that doesn't know better? Good news! We are EXACTLY those kind of suckers. We know nothing about computers and thought it would be cool to start our own "IT" business. The fact that we know nothing has done nothing to stop us - in fact, we throw away oodles of cash on useless computer junk, enabling shrewd people to upgrade completely at OUR EXPENSE. Take advantage of our utter stupidity. Sell us your old junk now. We pay far more than anything is truly worth. And that's a guarantee!

MORON SYSTEMS Inc. (CC) Pty
011 - 111 - 1110

NAG
SMALL
ADVERTS



96mm x 133.5mm

[3mm Bleed]

[w] 102mm x [h] 139.5mm



We have Mastered the Following Arts

- Custom Built Gaming Solutions
- PC Cooling Solutions & Case modding Accessories (Thermaltake, Antec, Vantec etc)
- Quality PC Components (Graphics, Memory etc)
- Console & PC Game titles
- PC Based Multimedia Systems & Hardware
- Official Support Centre for all Megarom Interactive Distributed Game Titles

Dare to Unleash your Inner Child?

Sales

011 805 3951 sales@xtremems.co.za

Support

0861 987 363 or 0861 XTREME
support@xtremems.co.za

megarom
interactive

PROUDLY DISTRIBUTED BY MEGAROM INTERACTIVE (PTY) LTD.
011 234 2680 | SALES@MEGAROM.CO.ZA | WWW.MEGAROM.CO.ZA

book reviews:

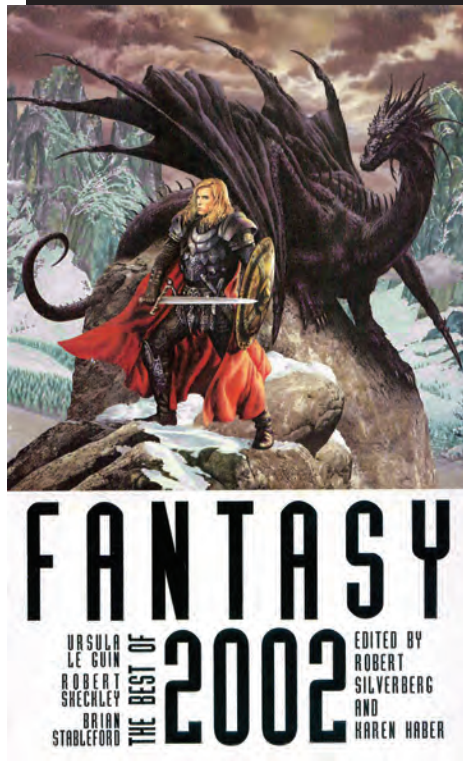
and now for something completely different

December is normally spent reflecting on the events of the past year and devoting time to family and friends. This month's book review section places the spotlight on what promises to be a very worthwhile holiday read, *The Best of Fantasy 2002*.

Comprising eleven short stories, *The Best of Fantasy 2002* is a veritable treasure trove of intriguing tales that are sure to grip the reader from the start. Compiled by well-known fantasy authors Robert Silverberg and Karen Haber, this anthology (now in its second year) features the best fantasy short stories of the year chosen from magazines, other anthologies and journals.

While predominantly focusing on fantasy, this collection also contains several science fiction short stories. The editors argue that science fiction is a branch of fantasy and not a genre unto itself. Whatever the merits of this statement, the stories selected do complement each other in some way or another.

The problem with many anthologies is that the editors tend to lose sight of the fact that the collection still needs some sort of focus. Silverberg and Haber have escaped this trap and have chosen stories that have a golden thread tying them together. In fact, several stories address similar issues in vastly different ways. *The Face of an Angel* by Brian Stableford and *The Majesty of*



Angels by Robert Reed are two brilliant examples of how quasi-religious issues can be depicted

the best of fantasy 2002

Editor: Robert Silverberg and Karen Haber
Publisher: ibooks (2003)
ISBN: 0 743 45867 2
Pages: 358
Format: Paperback
Kalahari.net price (excl. delivery): R79.96

in an interesting and entertaining way without coming across as trite. Coming in at the opposite end of these religious issues, is *Dating Secrets of the Dead* written by David Prill. Without giving away too much, this humorous story about the difficulties dead people face when going on dates has a serious undertone that comes to light at the very end. This twist in the tale, made famous by so many of the old pulp horror stories of the 1940s and 1950s, is what sets this anthology apart. Every one of the eleven stories has something enlightening to offer the reader. Even the Asimov-style *Ailoura* by Paul di Filippo will provide even the most sceptical reader with something out of the ordinary. My one criticism is directed to all anthologies and not this one specifically. By definition, an anthology is a collection of short stories written by different authors. The reader is therefore tasked with adapting his/her reading style quickly to suit each specific author. Just as the reader is getting comfortable with a specific writing style, the story ends and the process starts anew. However, *The Best of Fantasy 2002* does eliminate this risk to some extent as the short stories are all well written. If you are looking for a very entertaining read that provides insight into the direction the fantasy (and science fiction) genre is heading in, then I suggest you give this anthology a try.

Pearson Education South Africa is distributing the official range of Brady Games strategy guides for all major PC and console titles. These guides are all high quality and offer more than enough game information and strategy tips. Of course, what would a strategy guide be without walkthroughs and the Brady Games range excels in providing the gamer with step-by-step information on how to complete a specific title.

The guides we looked at this month include *Grand Theft Auto III* (PC), *Midnight Club II* (PC), *Star Trek Elite Force II* (PC), *Resident Evil Zero* (GC), *The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker* (GBA) and *Pokémon Ruby & Sapphire Trainers Guide* (GBA).

The Signature Series (of which *Resident Evil Zero*, *Midnight Club II*, *Pokémon Ruby & Sapphire* and *The Legend of Zelda The Wind Waker* are part of) features full-colour maps, screenshots and background information with the other titles being strictly black and white. Want to own this nifty little collection of Official Strategy Guides? Then e-mail us at comp@nag.co.za with your name and contact details and also let us know if you would prefer the PC or the console guides. Easy hey?

official strategy guides

Supplied By: Pearson Education
 Tel: [021] 531 7750
 Website: www.pearsoned.co.za
 RRP: PC Titles R239.95 / Console Titles R169.95



Break the speed limit on the super-highway

ADSL allows high-speed data transmissions by delivering powerful, high rate digital data over existing telephone lines, at a much lower cost.

With ADSL you get:

- Real time communication - Instant downloading
- Cost savings - Flat monthly Internet & Telkom bill
- Simultaneous use of voice and data
- High connection speeds for real-time online gaming

adsl @ tiscali

Supercharge your Internet connection

 **TISCALI**

World Online

THE COMMUNICATION COMPANY

Call us now:

0860 00 56 56

or e-mail: sales@tiscali.co.za

* This service is subject to your geographical location

alt.gaming:

Things look a bit different this month, as you may well have noticed. We take a look at the intricacies of Limited format competitions for Magic: The Gathering. Also, we take a peek at six exciting comic titles, four excellent figurines and, to round off, we take a gander at White Wolf Publishing's latest installment in their soon to be discontinued World of Darkness setting...



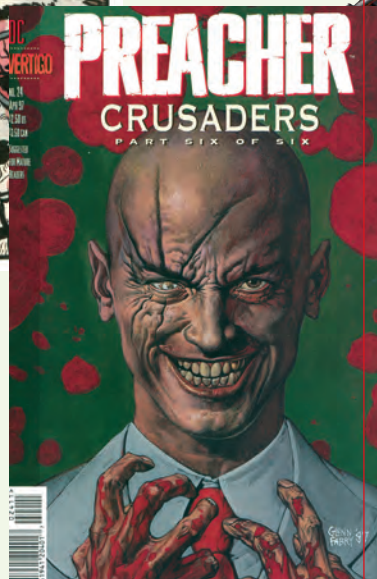
Spawn (Image)
RRP: R 22.50

Al Simmons had it all, a good job, a loving wife, a house with a picket fence. Then he decided he didn't like being an assassin, and was killed for it. Six years later he's back with the power of hell at his fingertips. He decides though, to go against his demon master and fight for good instead. A decision made difficult while watching his wife now married to another man. This is a sometimes gloomy, sometimes funny storyline that has something for all tastes, with occasional moral and ethical questions that give it a little more depth than is perhaps the norm in the comic book field.



Graphic Novels: Preacher (DC Vertigo)
RRP: R 119 - R 140 per volume (9 volumes)

God has decided to take a vacation, and the reverend Jesse Custer isn't happy about it. Jesse has inherited the voice of God, the ability to make anyone do as he says, and he wants to use it to make God pay for deserting his people. Add in an Irish vampire, a secret catholic group trying to rule the world, and the six gun carrying Saint of Killers and you have a tale of passion, violence and naughty words. Written by Garth Ennis and drawn by Steve Dillon, it's not for children, but if you like your entertainment hard, this is the one for you.



Magic:

What is the limited format?

As discussed in one of the previous articles, there are many different formats one can use when playing Magic: The Gathering. This article will focus around one of the more fun formats: Limited.

So what is the Limited format? Well it is termed limited due to the fact that each player in the event has a limited card pool from which to build a deck. A limited event is run by opening sealed Magic boosters or starters and building a deck from the contents. Of course each pack has random cards, plus a set number of rare, uncommon and common cards. So each player gets the same number of cards.

There are three formats that are played in Limited:

Sealed Deck: Here each player gets a sealed starter pack and two sealed boosters of cards. This is the

fairest format in one way, due to the fact that no matter what, each player has the same chances at what cards he gets. It's not who owns the best cards as it is in some of the constructed formats. However it also means that if you open a bunch of junk, you are pretty much stuck with it the whole event and will probably not do well. The flip side to that is you could open up real bombs (great game breaking cards) and win the whole event. **Draft:** In this limited format each player has 3 booster packs. You need between 4 and 8 players for a draft. A sanctioned draft runs with 8 players. In the draft each player opens their first pack of cards, picks only a single card and then passes the pack to their left. They then receive their neighbour's pack and then pick another card and pass it on. And so on until there are no more cards from the first pack. Once the first pack is

complete players have a chance to review what they have picked so they can adjust their strategy. Then onto the second pack with the same process except to the right. And you guessed it the third pack is the same back to the left.

This is more skill intensive strategy as you don't know what the players around you are picking. So you must make decisions about what cards to pick based on not only what the best cards are, but what colours you have picked so far, and what signals have been sent to you by reviewing the packs you get. An example could be you see a lack of good red cards, that could mean that the 2 players ahead of you are going red, and therefore you should steer clear of red or you will not get any good red cards.

Those are the very basics. There are many articles on



Spawn 24: The Classic Covers
RRP: R 140

Spawn has been around for a few years now and it's still going strong, despite creator Todd McFarlane preferring to spend time on toys and games. The Spawn 24 series recreates Spawn poses from several classic covers, specifically 39, 43 (seen here), 64, 88, 109 and Hellspawn 1. To give you a bit of perspective, the one we have here is 14 inches tall (35 cm). Personally, we're looking for a version of #10, with Cerebus in it, or maybe an Angela one? Please, please, please?



Soul Calibur II figurines
RRP: R 120

McFarlane Productions have released 5 figurines based on the recently released Soul Calibur 2, namely Ivy, Astaroth, Voldo, Nightmare and McFarlane's own Necrid, which he designed for the game. Each figurine is 4 inches (10 cm) tall and has a Custom base and special box, not to mention that each figurine also has their individual weapons. Well, what do you expect from the 'best weapons-based combat game of all time'? (We got that from the site.)

RPG Review: Orpheus

Although White Wolf Publishing have confidently told us that the World of Darkness games are coming to their furious end, they have recently brought a new instalment of the World of Darkness onto the market as part of a limited run five book set. Named Orpheus, this title is the first of five books which follows a rough movie model in presenting this new game setting (a rather complicated experiment which, sadly, I do not have the space to explain here). Suffice to say that as a kick off product, Orpheus is a great piece of work. Players are part of an organisation called Orpheus, which ostensibly investigates hauntings and similar activities. However, behind the scenes, Orpheus uses their agents (who have astral projection powers) to perform

all kinds of dirty work. Although the game looks and feels just like any other World of Darkness title (with similar rules and systems) the game is set apart from the rest of this vast world. There are no Vampires fighting Werewolves while Mages watch from the shadows here. Instead, the game is something of a stand alone product. However, the familiar setting and rule system make it a snap to get into. Through its five expansions, Orpheus is aiming to be a rather heavy and disturbing horror title, more suited for role playing than strategic sword swinging and dungeon crawling. Suffice to say that not everyone will like this title, but those willing to spend the roughly R400 that the book costs will utterly love it. Good stuff from a group of gaming masters!



drafting strategy around the net and this strategy changes depending on the latest sets that have been released.

Rochester Draft: There are two major differences between normal draft and Rochester draft. The first is that only one booster is used at a time. Not everyone opens their first booster at the same time. Each booster (one at a time) is laid out face up on the table so all the drafters can see all the cards. Then players start to pick cards in sequence until the first pack is finished. Then onto the next players pack with the same sequence until all the packs are gone. The sequence for picking cards is fairly complicated so I won't go into it here. This in many ways can be more skill intensive, and in other ways is not. If everyone co-operates in this type of draft the draft should go on auto-pilot so to speak.

You know your colours and all your neighbours, if you steer clear everyone should be fine, then it boils down to luck of what bombs get opened when. However if people start to fight for colours things get ugly and the draft can be very difficult. Basically you could be at the mercy of your fellow drafters. However remember if they try to screw you over, they are also screwing themselves over. Let's say they pick a good green card away from you, they could be passing up a good card in their own colours. However there are times you may want to do that.

There are also team Rochester drafts where three players per team each Rochester together to play a team battle. This is quite a fun format and is growing in popularity in South Africa. So that's all on limited play. In the next issue we will

look at the strategy of deck building for limited events, how many creatures you should play, and what the right combination of land is.



Myths and movies

Google futures

labs.google.com

Google might be the devil - there's no denying that the search engine gives you access to a ton of information, something that scares a few people. But it's also a very useful site and a search engine NAG swears by. The Labs section of Google is full of stuff they are currently working on, but not yet releasing for general public consumption. Current projects include a comparer, a list builder and a nifty way to search sites for popular quotes (sure to be a hit with some of our staff). There are also some stranger services which might not see the light of day, but that's up to the public, who can give suggestions and criticisms on the projects. If NAG was to be a bit philosophical here, it's a sign of how search engines are becoming the true information harvesters we want them to be. There's probably a good quote on that...



M.I.A.

www.xbox.com

We might not have the console in the country, but that's still no excuse not to keep tabs on the system and what's coming out for it. Microsoft recently re-launched the Xbox site with a fresh new look, obviously to cater more for their popular Live and XSN services. Sadly, you're still better off visiting non-official sites, since the official Xbox site snubs mostly any game that isn't an exclusive on the platform. Plus, it's quite bias, but that's what you'd expect. Still, if you are in any way a fan of the platform, you should go and sign up to the newsletter. If anything, visit it once just to see what a good-looking site Microsoft has put together.

Gaming watchdog

www.gigex.com/FAMILY/

What should and shouldn't your kids play? Still in its early stages, the Gigex Family site aims to help out parents who need to know just how mature certain titles are. The site gives an overview of the game and explains why the title is or isn't suited for certain age groups. Backed by a nice, colourful design and a group of writers who seem to know what they are talking about, the idea is great but the games covered are still few, plus there is no back archive as of yet. Still, it's a good place to start before you go out buying a game for someone.



Keeping in the movie loop

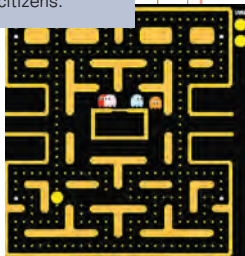
www.joblo.com

Movies! Who can live without movies? Well, a lot of people actually, but this bit is obviously not aimed at them. NAG loves movies and our beloved Editor still assures us that this will be a great year for movies. On the up side he's very happy we're getting our December articles in by February, so who are we to ask him to update his calendar? JoBlo is a great site to keep up to date with the latest happenings in movies, from trailer and poster releases to the latest news and gossip. Every day you can get a new chunk of news on what is going on out there, and unlike a lot of movie sites who tend to give you arbitrary information on how some starlet's dog went missing, JoBlo is focused on the movies themselves, making it great for fans of the medium. The site also has some great competitions, but those are only open to US citizens.

Play time

www.miniclip.com/flashman.htm

Get your Flash out and warm those fingers for some online Pac man action. Okay, it's not perfect, and our old man Pac is now as responsive as his offline versions, but it's a good way to waste some time at the office.



Clearing up the myths...

www.snopes.com

Was there really a cookie recipe that someone was conned into buying and now he is spreading it for free? Will Bill Gates really give you cash if you forward a specific e-mail? Did someone really build a jet-engine on top of his car and then drive himself into oblivion? Urban Legends and hoaxes have taken quite a place in society and thanks to the Internet they are spreading like wild fire. Good thing there are sites out there dedicated to cataloguing these rumours. For one, it puts them to rest, or at least gives the less-impressionable a place to check on something before deciding its true. But it also makes for interesting reading, and you have to wonder just how many of these legends are true... Snopes does a good job in bringing together a huge selection of legends, e-mails, news reports and other things listed under popular categories to check through. You can search the Archive, which contains variations on legends as well as possible origins (if available). You can also waste some time pulling up random legends or join the mailing lists to keep in touch with modern folklore.



Find your place

Who are you, exactly? The world is a big, confusing place and we are but small specs of star dust in the Cosmos. This doesn't stop you, though, from taking oodles of Net quizzes to find out the real you...

quizilla.com/users/trinitykills/quizzes/

Which Matrix character are you?

A useful quiz to do, just in case this really is the Matrix and you might need to kick some machine ass...

quizme.stvlive.com/candy/quiz.php

Which candy are you? This is important because you might be something really awful which is a good defence against cannibals...

quizilla.com/users/miktart/quizzes/

Which NAG staff member are you? Just in case one of us dies and we need a quick replacement...

www.geocities.com/teo592/quiz/dragon.html

What's your inner dragon? You know, in case you

ever meet one and it doesn't eat you...

bbspot.com/News/2003/01/os_quiz.php

Which Operating System are you? Well, Microsoft won't push that Windows thing forever. You might be the next big thing!

quizme.stvlive.com/pointless/quiz.php

We took it, and we're a George Foreman grill. It's nice to know your place.

MAGIC

The Gathering



The world's best Trading Card Game will pitch your wits against your opponents'. You'll need all the help you can get: strong creatures, nerves of steel and some serious muscle - like the one between your ears. To start playing Magic: The Gathering, nothing beats the Core Game Starter Set. It has everything two people need to play their first game. The step-by-step demo CD-Rom makes playing the first game easy.



gaMes empoRium

Distributed in South Africa
by Games Emporium
www.geon.co.za
magic@icon.co.za

The Magic: The Gathering logo and the play level logos are registered trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc. ©2003 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.



Anime Legends - Megumi Hayashibara

Voice actors / actresses are called "seiyuu" in Japan, and are treated very much the same way live action actors / actresses are treated in western cinema i.e., as celebrities. Megumi Hayashibara herself grew up as an anime fan, and one of her dreams as a child was to be involved in bringing characters to life with her voice. She was born in Tokyo on the 30th of March, 1967. However, when her father suffered a stroke during her teenage years, her interests (partly due to family pressure) shifted towards nursing. While studying to achieve this, she came across an audition being advertised for young people who wanted to become voice actors. After convincing her parents to let her go, she thoroughly impressed the agency and was one of sixteen teenagers to be selected, out of the six hundred who applied.

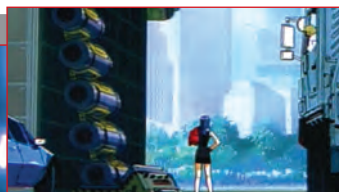
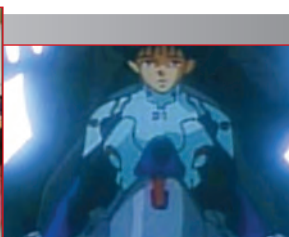
She trained at Arts Vision for several years before quitting her job as a nurse to become a fulltime voice actress. She landed her first role in 1986 at the age of 19 in the anime series "Maison Ikkoku", where she played a young boy. Since then, she has performed leading and important supporting roles in more than thirty animes. Some of the characters that have made her famous are Ranma-chan (Ranma ½), a boy occasionally trapped in a girl's body; Rei Ayanami (Neon Genesis Evangelion), arguably



Megumi's anime legacy

1989:	"Ranma ½" (Ranma-chan)
1991:	"Video Girl Ai" (Ai Amano)
1992:	"3x3 Eyes" (Pai / Parvati)
1994:	"DNA" (Tomoko Saeki)
1994:	"Macross Plus" (Lucy)
1995:	"Neon Genesis Evangelion" (Rei Ayanami / Yui Ikari / Pen Pen)
1995:	"Slayars" (Lina Inverse)
1996:	"Sabre Marionette" (Lime)
1996:	"Tenchi Muyo in Love" (Achika Masaki)
1998:	"Cowboy Bebop" (Faye Valentine)
2000:	"Love Hina" (Haruka Urashima)

the most famous anime character ever; and Faye Valentine, from the ever popular series Cowboy Bebop. Megumi married in 1998, but so far has no children. She says she never had a problem getting the roles she wanted, but her ultimate wish is to play a part in a film by Hayao Miyazaki (the director of "Princess Mononoke" and "Spirited Away").



Neon Genesis Evangelion



This is possibly the most difficult review I will ever have to write. It would have been far less daunting when Evangelion was first released, but criticising a series that has become this infamous is quite a task to accomplish with complete objectivity. It redefined an entire genre of anime, creating new perceptions and destroying others. In many people's hearts (my own included) it will always hold a special place, as it is responsible for drawing them into anime. (It is also one of the very few decent shows to be aired on the Sci-Fi channel). Therefore, in the end, whatever rating I give it, there will still be a group of unsatisfied fans from which I will no doubt receive much hate mail.

Evangelion is a very complex series, although sometimes unnecessarily so. Many of the references require some background knowledge of a certain school of thought (concerning the nature of humankind, its creation, and its relationship with nature). If you are not familiar with this theory, you will most likely be confused at some point. The writers could have done a lot more to explain their motivations. However, the story does contain enough easily-understandable elements to keep casual viewers interested... up to a point.

The show's main strength is its character relationships, which are stronger, more dynamic, and better written than in 99% of other fiction. Whether you adore or despise a character, the emotion is created in a very real way - they matter to each other, and to the audience. As an ensemble cast they are superb.

What is Neon Genesis Evangelion about? It is set in the near future and most of the human race has been annihilated in an incident referred to as the "second impact". The survivors are constantly under threat from a group of immensely powerful entities known as the "angels", and thus a special United Nations division, called "Nerv", is established to combat the threat. Shinji Ikari is a young boy recruited by his father - the commander of this organisation - and along with several other children (among them the charming personalities of Rei Ayanami and Asuka Langley Sohryu), he is asked to pilot one of the giant robots called "Evangelion" in order to defeat the angels.

While you will discover that this approach to mecha anime is quite different from most, it is still mecha anime. And as such, it can be juvenile at times. Many of the episodes are quite pointless in terms of story - large explosions, gratuitous action and countless cliff-hanger moments. But I cannot stress this enough: you must watch it all the way through, especially the two films. As the story nears its end, it becomes a lot more intelligent and meaningful, and the overall conclusion is worth every second.

Genre: Drama / Science Fiction

Year: 1995

Producer: Gainax

Format: Series and Movies

Episodes: 26 + 2 movies

Language: English, Japanese with English Subtitles

Availability: Common

Concept 8

Story 7

Soundtrack 7

Characters 10

Animation 9

Translation 9

Total Score (out of 100) 84



STER-KINEKOR

McFARLANE
IT'S AN ATTITUDE

PlayStation 2



AnimeWorX Specialists in Anime and Video gaming – Situated in the Brightwater Commons (Old Randburg Waterfront). We Stock Anime, Manga, Playstation 2, GameCube, Gameboy Advance and Now... Figurines!



New and Exclusive to our Members is the AnimeWorX "Anime on the Big Screen" night. Where you get to watch new and classic Anime at the cinema.

For more information Contact 0822 33 5005 - Just another reason to become a member ASAP!

Winners of last months SMS Competition for Instant prizes are:

- SSX3 for ps2 + EA t-shirt - Oliver Gimberg
- Return of the king for ps2 + EA t-shirt - Riaan Botes
- Dragon Ball Z TVSeries Box set - Pieter Uys Fourie
- Cowboy Bebop TV series - Eric Lombard
- Trigun TV Series Boxset - Carla Deklerk

Additional prizewinners will be notified soon!

So you want to Win cool prizes too? Easy - Anybody can enter, just SMS your Name & the Code "2523" to 083 919 5400. You'll automatically get 1 years free membership and stand a chance of winning R250 000 or Instant prizes. It's That Simple!

AnimeWorX – where Real gamers buy Real games.

(old Randburg Waterfront)

Shop G16(a)

Tel: 0822 33 5005

email: AnimeWorX@telkomsa.net

Trading hours: 9am – 9 pm

the brightwater
COMMONS

The Green solution to your lifestyle blues

Cheat Codes
Walkthroughs &
information
HELP Line

0822-33-5005

For PS2, GameCube, Xbox

- Release Dates

- Reviews

- Telephonic Purchases



PlayStation 2

NINTENDO
GAMECUBE™

Dear Fat Frilly Farts

Perhaps it's just me, but I fail to see what that nitwit Ramjet has to offer the magazine. Is he just there to fill up space? I postulate that you could randomly print any text from any piece of paper on any rubbish dump and end up with something far more valuable and enjoyable than his pointless ranting. I mean, what's the response to his tripe supposed to be? "Oh, look, he not-so-cleverly ripped off another unwary gamer. I sure hope that it makes him feel better". So what? If he won't leave the offices, I say shove a grenade into his mouth and pull the pin - at least that way, he can provide some funky decoration for the ceiling, or something. I really can't think of any other use for him.

Morgue [FLB]

Ed: I couldn't agree more... I like your rubbish dump concept - I might try it next issue and see what we get.

Laughing off responsibility

I was very disappointed to see the treatment a letter regarding game

journalism received in the October issue (Rampage, page 26), even if this was not an actual letter. I think the readers of NAG have come to expect a level of sarcastic humour from the magazines' journalists, and this is often quite funny (where used appropriately). In this case, however, this approach is (in my opinion) totally inappropriate. Many gamers look up to and envy game journalists, game developers and anyone involved in the game industry professionally. Young gamers have relatively few people to turn to (locally) to get advice on breaking into the games industry. Those individuals lucky enough to have made their way in have a responsibility to those who would still like to try and make it. Questions such as 'what should I study' and 'what do you actually do' are legitimate ones that could only really be answered by someone actually working in that capacity (since we don't have any sort of game industry-related career guidance facilities). People asking these questions should not be scoffed at, and should not be treated with undue sarcasm. NAG has, in the past, been really helpful to the potential game developers and journalists out there by running a number of articles on breaking into the industry and tutorials on learning the necessary skills. I really hope this article does not indicate a change in that attitude.

Matt

Ed: Okay, we'll get rid of Ramjet. He probably doesn't know any of the answers anyway and you can hardly look to him for journalistic integrity or any useful advice anyway. Besides, we play games for a living - you don't get any less responsible than that!

PC Upgrade Again

Not to long ago I upgraded my PC because most gaming magazines (including NAG) referred to a Pentium 4 2.6 GHz as "the fastest there is." Sure, I enjoy spending money - everyone enjoys spending money, so I upgraded without hesitation. Then, recently, slapping me in the face was the Pentium 4 2.8 GHz with Hyper Threading. Now what? I knew I couldn't spend that much money that often, so I remained happy with what I had. Now more recently the Pentium 4 3.02 GHz was released. Why can't the industry stay within reasonable boundaries until it's really, umm, necessary to expand? I haven't seen one game or program that required more

than 1.8 GHz. Come to think of it, PC's at gaming cafés are 1.6 GHz average and they have all the latest games installed. People really should learn that it's no good having the best hardware but you cannot use it until the software rises up to those standards.

Mute

Ed: This is the nature of the beast - if it wasn't for this phenomenon we'd all still be using steam to make things go. I'm curious about your 'childlike' amazement at the state of the hardware industry - as they say upgrade or get left behind. Incidentally, not too long ago gaming magazines were raving about how fast a 486 DX100 was.

Cruelty to NAG magazines

I'm writing in protest to Alan "Banzai BoB" Farre's models in the October 2003 issue. Not that I have anything against the models - they look great. But dear sir, what the hell went through your sick sadistic mind when you found it okay to cut up the beautiful front covers of your NAG magazines to include with your model. This man should be flogged and then tarred and feathered. Readers unite! We should root out all such heresy against our NAG magazine.

Blazerfrost

Ed: I have the feeling it was one of your great grandfathers that incited the crowds that eventually made their way up to Dracula's castle all those years ago. Tell me... how do you feel when I say the word, 'pitchfork' or 'burning torch'? Hang on - how about 'Salem'?

Nothing specific

I really don't get the point of buying headsets for R400 when mine work perfectly and they cost me a mere R30. Why don't you have competitions where people try to think up the best, funniest, dumbest, most relevant, or whatever "If your cover CD is missing" quotes. A while ago everyone was obsessed with mouse fluff, where can I send mine to have it tested to see if it really is the dreaded 'skin'.

James

Ed: Once you try a pair of R 400 headsets you'll understand why. The problem with a

competition like that is we usually end up with the 'dumbest' end of the scale - I'm not suggesting anything however - you have read the last few...?

[The following letter was received as is. It's unedited to highlight a point, Ed]

freelancer

Hi,i found a old issue of NAG laying around and i saw your advertisement for writers so i've decided to respond.Im only 15 years old and supposed to be in std8 but due to the fact that im in college i'll be writing my matric next year,and would like to study journalism so this would give me a chance to build a portfolio.But regarding games i think that im capable of handling any game you throw at me,i love all types of games and i'm even prepared to write <edited for space>. I would have to say that im not the best player in the world,but i know what i and every gamer out there want from a game,it has to be realistic,fun and challenging,and i think i've been playing long enough to realise which game has this and which one doesn't <edited for space>.

vroom,vroom,vroom,screech. This is what you first hear when you start up Midnight Club 2,at this point in time the game looks promising.But does it deliver?Well im glad to say that it does,of course it could have been a little more interesting but it's still very fulfilling.The basic lockdown on the story is that you're a street racer looking do get some respect and to try win some car's,you go upon youre task in numerous cities Tokyo,Paris and Los Angeles,along the way you'll meet some interesting characters,some of which almost remind me of certain actors in a upcoming film by the name of 2 Fast 2 Furious(check it out if you don't believe me)anyways back to the game,after you win a race you win your opponents car which is pretty awesome,because as you

SHORTS

Urgent enquiry

Let's just say... perhaps... that I had come up with an idea for a computer game that would shape the future of entertainment? What could you recommend as steps to be taken to achieve the production of this idea? Any advice would be greatly appreciated.

Damian

Ed: Let's just say you need to start by asking yourself one question, "How do I bake a cake?" Going from cool idea to finished game requires nothing less than the following: a few years, at least 15 qualified professional developers, artists, musicians etc. and a few million in the bank. Good luck.

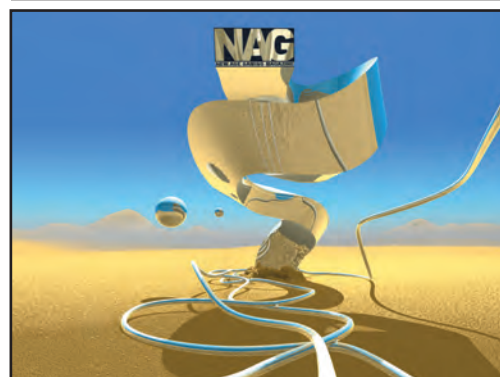
Badger

Hey man what's up with the little Badger in the N of the NAG (October 2003)? Is it like a weird animal activist symbol or what?

Unknown

Ed: The badger is our new friend - we love his soft fur and big brown eyes. The badger is very important as he will be appearing [suggestion on the NAG forums] in a screenshot each month - the first person to tell me where he is hiding each issue will win a prize.

The Satanic Bonsai Moose-Squirrel by Mutant





progress further you get pretty mean machines. The gameplay is good, graphics are also good but could have been better, the sound is great and the music tracks are even better, they range from house beats to rap battles, there is a multiplayer feature which is a lot of fun, especially in battle mode, where you

SHORTS

Enough already

Last month I sent you a letter in which I asked you the following simple question, "How many readers do you guys have per month? No sarcastic replies please". To which you answered... sarcastically. You obviously failed English in high school, how on earth did you manage to become the Editor of the best gaming magazine ever? Now please answer my question and I repeat do not answer sarcastically please! OMG please!!

Cloud

Ed: Boy, you sure are hard to resist. I'm the Editor of this fine publication because someone somewhere didn't bother to check any of my references - I didn't actually finish Donkey Kong.

Quickly

Why do you guys only publish my short, thoughtless, rubbish letters and not the ones I pour my heart and soul into? P.S: If you publish this letter I'm going to be really annoyed.

Cloud

Ed: I'm starting to suspect you're sending in mail like this because you think it'll be published each time. You may have won this time my friend but I've created a new mail box assistant to delete any and all mail sent in by your account. You've been bust, consider this letter your last moment of fame.

Ghost Data

What the heck are those empty square brackets doing after the names of publishers in the Information sections of your reviews?

Morgue [FLB]

Ed: I'm glad you asked, they are in fact performing an ancient ritualistic ceremony called "Ca'thuk" loosely based on Mayan cave drawings and information derived from eyewitness accounts of these bizarre rituals. Sometimes, late at night, you can hear the chanting, "gowa waya ana botha sum-woné else."

get some cool powerups to try and decimate your opponents. Overall it was pretty good game, but one thing I was looking forward to, was a buy and upgrade feature where you could tune and buy parts for your car, but this aside it is a good game and could be a nice add-on to your collection of games, and for buying and upgrading cars there's always Gran Turismo 4 to look out for!

Well there you go there's my attempt to try and type a review, I know I'm not an A-list candidate and there's probably no spots available but it was worth a shot, if you even read this I would appreciate if you could e-mail me some advice or what you thought about it or E-mail if you have a position for a toilet cleaner!

Not stated

Ed: In an attempt to right the previous wrongs committed by Ramjet I'll try and be as helpful as possible here and actually give you some pointers. Firstly your subject header didn't feature a capital letter - a minor mistake but it stands out and tells me you might neglect other small details when doing something important like writing a real review. During your opening paragraph you also make a number of grammatical and spelling errors and you fail to use a capital "I" when referring to yourself, you also really need to start inserting spaces between full stops and new sentences. You also state that you're not the best at playing games - at this stage your application isn't looking very good at all and I haven't even read the review yet. Besides all the errors previously highlighted, your review lacks any kind of structure. You also fail to mention why the graphics or anything else for that matter are good or bad - you need to justify why you're saying something. As for the rest you hardly cover anything important, you refer to yourself too often and I still have no clear idea what the game is like and if it's any good or bad for that matter. Anyone is welcome to submit game reviews for consideration but if you're not even going to bother with a simple thing like checking your spelling then don't bother sending in anything at all - you're just wasting valuable bandwidth and clogging up my inbox.

What happened to AI?

I was playing the demo of Delta Force: Black Hawk Down the other day, and when the helicopters touched ground I was horrified to see the worst AI ever.

The enemy AI is even worse, their reaction times are as slow as a donkey and you have all the time in the world to shoot them. Then we get to the civilians (hostages), all these guys do is get in your way; in a good game they would stay behind you, but in DF: BHD they just wander off into the most dangerous parts of the map. Does this mean that gaming AI is becoming worse? I know that there are many other games with good AI, but what happened here? Were they just too lazy to write some good AI or is it just a matter of not being able to write it. Anyway I was just getting really frustrated so I just uninstalled and decided to write you guys.

Tom_H

Ed: It's a little of both actually, I haven't played that particular game so I can't comment on the AI. Artificial intelligence is a tricky thing to perfect - it'll be a good few years until we see a computer controlled opponent behaving anything close to a human player.

Also please remember you are playing a demo and demos are notorious for sloppy code and a few bugs.

Problem

I love your magazine, it's great. But there's only one thing that bugs me, it's that you guys change your look every 3-4 months! Can't you at least leave it alone for 6 months?

ghoSt

Ed: Oops, you're probably not going to like this issue then... we see NAG as a constantly changing and improving upgradeable entity and standing still is suicide. Besides we're never happy with how the thing looks, and if we keep changing things people won't notice all the problems.

Gaming in SA

Let me take you back 2 or 3 years ago when gaming in South Africa had just begun to take flight. A big event was held that was back then (the equivalent of today's Gamers Gate WCG qualifiers). I remember the event well because of the great time I had while being at the event. There were 3 big screens each showing a match from the various games that were being played at the time. In front of them was a large stand area that was packed with spectators, gamers and the public alike. There was an impressively large BYOC section, many exhibitor stalls and even an area for the public to try out and play games on supplied PCs. The most important factor that made this event awesome was the atmosphere, gamers were cheering each other on and there were smiles everywhere. I compare this to the events held in the last year or so where gamers can play as little as 1 or 2 matches in a day, there is little or no seating for spectators and maybe one screen for watching the matches. The gamers at these recent events are looking for any excuse to complain and although I don't support them, some of their reasons are valid. It has caused a bad vibe to surface in our community and two sides have formed - the gamers and the organisers. Each side believes they are innocent yet both are to be blamed. The organisers have to start addressing the real problems at their events, such as PR - the gamers are not well informed before an event and end up only knowing what's happening on the day of the event. The gamers are not reliable enough and many that register for an event don't pitch up and those that do blame their lack of skill on the supplied computers (a good player is a versatile player). My final point is that although there are more and more events, increased gaming skill and a larger community, we as a whole have not grown enough and the results show when we go overseas and try to compete. I believe that this must be seriously looked at - the only way to fix this is if the community can work together.

SnowLock

Ed: You have a valid point - although I believe that our performance overseas has everything to do with the level of competition in this country and lack of experience. Please also know that NAG is always working to improve the situation with everyone involved and because we're essentially the voice of the industry many look to us for guidance [heaven help them]. If you attended rAge then you'll also know that we've proven our commitment to this situation by putting on the best computer gaming event in South Africa... ever [plug]. We also take our position seriously enough to turn away event advertising or sponsorship should the proposed event not meet a reasonable standard. Having said all this we're not perfect and have made a few mistakes in the past and will probably do so again but as each situation unfolds, good or bad, we learn a little more. Regarding the struggle between organisers and gamers, you are correct, everyone is to blame. From an organisers point of view we always want every community represented but in some instances, certain communities <cough> Counter-Strike <cough> need significantly more effort than others thus the decision to include all communities needs to be carefully considered - this is strictly a realistic perspective, buttering it up for easier consumption isn't going to fix the problem. The good news is that 2004 is looking even juicier in terms of big events with the Electronic Sports World Cup, all the killer Gamers Gate Carousel events and rAge 2004 to mention a few.

pyjama party madness

Okay, so maybe I am not the most social of gamers. Perhaps I only go to LANs when I know I stand a chance of winning - like when they have special events at retirement homes and stuff like that. Going to LANs is actually pretty low on my list of priorities, falling somewhere between organising my sock drawer or pocket lint collection. So, admittedly, I don't really understand too much about this so called gaming sub-culture that seems to be gaining such popularity. Which is probably why I don't understand the whole "sleep over" aspect of LANs.

There were many complaints from gamers that they would not be able to sleep over at rAge. Now I can understand the reasons why they weren't allowed to - security risks and all that - as well as being able, on the other hand, to understand the appeal of an all night game. Hell, back in the days when we were dating girls with clubs and a bit of dragging around, all night LANs were the in thing (yes, I used to be a big time LAN gamer - then I grew old and jaded and purchased a used soap box.) But I don't for a minute believe that many people interested in "sleep-over" facilities want to go play all night LANs.

I don't believe them because I have, from the shadows where I lurk, seen them. I have seen them lit by the glow from the monitors of the select few who do have the desire to play all night. I have seen them actually sleeping.

Leads me to a question, it does. Why exactly do these guys get so worked up about sleep over facilities? Sure, some of you travel a long way to a LAN and probably wouldn't be able to afford a room at the filthiest Formula One, but the majority of gamers who attend LANs are local guys. Yet they still

want to sleep over. And you can't tell me that they want to get up early for some pre-breakfast gaming... most of these guys would have to be blasted out of bed with fourteen pounds of

C4 if woken before noon. So no, it's not that either. There is only one logical conclusion, and it is as disturbing as it is ridiculous... They have, for some reason, the desire to partake in an activity generally practiced by the fairer sex... they want to have gamer style pyjama parties. Why, I don't know. It might be the need to bond with other guys who share similar interests on a different level. It might be the fact that they like the sounds of snoring and sleep inspired flatulence. Hell, it might even be the thrill of secret soggy biscuit games in the depths of the night, crowded around an Oreos with a torch and some Vaseline. I don't rightly know... Whatever the reason, it's pretty damn weird. However, just because I don't like it, it's probably going to carry on ad infinitum, ad nausea. However, a word of warning... now that the secret is out, all you sleep over fairies shouldn't wonder why other gamers look at you funny...

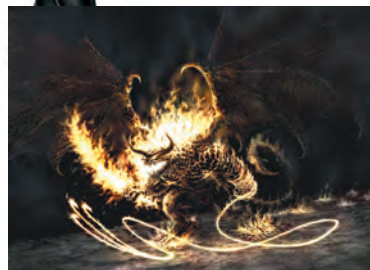


next month:

Soft stuff: December & January are arguably the best issues of the year from a sheer quantity of games point of view, they're falling out of the sky around here and there are more arriving each day. Look out for reviews of The Temple of Elemental Evil, UFO: Aftermath, War of the Ring, Prince of Persia, Chrome and SSX Tricky 3. We're also cramming in the previews and will have in-depth information on Deus Ex 2, Armed & Dangerous and possibly DOOM III.

Hard stuff: January will also feature a round-up of as many MP3 players as we can lay our hands on as well as an interesting feature on peripherals. We also chat to Pierre Brunswick, Regional Sales General Manager Southern Hemisphere from AMD about the 64 bit processor and the future of gaming.

Timing: The January issue will be on-shelf late December.



winner:



If this is a picture of you, then your name is **Daniel Prince** of Johannesburg, and you are the winner of our AOpen notebook competition, with a bunch of Microsoft gaming titles [5] thrown in. If this is not a picture of you, keep trying. You can't win if you don't enter.

NAG
NEW AGE GAMING MAGAZINE

publisher:
replay itv media (pty) ltd

big cheese:
michael james
ed@nag.co.za
+27 83 409 8220

features hack:
james francis
james@nag.co.za

guy who sells adverts:
len nery
sales@nag.co.za
+27 84 594 9909

more cheese:
lauren das neves
lauren@nag.co.za

design 'n whine:
walt pretorius

cover cd design:
dieter fourie

web design oak:
edouard dracon

contributors
adam liebman
alan kent
alex jelagin
andrew stephens
anton lines
brett hamilton
brett smith
charmain du plessis
derek dela fuente
edouard dracon
grant charlton
iwan pienaer
james francis
russell bennett
sean beamish
tom taylor
walt pretorius
bob peddlebin

nag magazine
p o box 237
olivedale
2158
south africa
tel +27 11 704 2701
fax +27 11 704 2948

subscriptions department
09h00 - 15h00
subs@nag.co.za

internet
www.nag.co.za

printing:
print ability
+27 11 785 4000

distribution sa:
junk mail distribution

distribution international:
stp distributors

Copyright 2003 Replay ITV Media (Pty) Ltd. All rights reserved. No article or picture in this magazine may be reproduced, copied or transmitted in any form whatsoever without the express written consent of the Publisher. Opinions expressed in the magazine are not necessarily those of the Publisher or the Editors. All Trademarks and Registered Trademarks are the sole property of their respective owners.

DESTRUCTION DERBY *Arenas*



AVAILABLE NOV 2003 WWW.PLAYSTATION.CO.UK

12+
TM



PlayStation®2

STER-KINEOR
HOME ENTERTAINMENT

SONY
COMPUTER
ENTERTAINMENT

"PS" and "PlayStation®2" logos are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment. All rights reserved. © 2001 Sterkinekor Home entertainment. Destruction Derby Arenas © 2002 Sony Computer Entertainment Europe. Developed by Studio 33. Published by Sony Computer Entertainment Europe. All rights reserved.



wireless learning anytime, anywhere



AOpen notebooks provide everyone accessibility to affordable luxury notebooks with great features such as DVD/CDRW Combo drives & wireless connectivity. From desktop PC components to notebooks, AOpen understands everyone's needs, and have the most experience in providing total solutions that meet ever changing demands.

XC Cube PC

Intel Pentium 4 Solution

- Intel Pentium 4 2.0 - 3.0GHz
- Intel 865G Chipset
- 512MB DDR Memory
- 30-40GB Hard Disk Drive
- GeForceFX VGA
- AOpen 52x Rewriter
- Matching keyboard & Optical mouse
- 15" AOpen LCD monitor



Gamer PC

AMD Athlon XP Solution

- AMD Athlon XP 2200+ CPU
- AOpen nForce2 Motherboard
- 256MB DDR Memory
- 30-40GB Hard Disk Drive
- GeForceFX Graphics
- AOpen 52x Rewriter
- Multimedia Office keyboard & Optical mouse
- 17" White AOpen monitor



1555GL

2 Spindle Centrino Notebook

- Intel Centrino 855GM/ICH4-M
- Intel Mobile M Chipset
- Intel wireless LAN card
- SPDIF digital interface
- Built-in Infra Red
- 15" XGA LCD
- DVD/CDRW Combo drive
- Dual view support
- Built-in LAN and Modem



* Optional

Contact your nearest
AOpen stockist

AOpen®

www.aopen.co.za

Component Solutions



Intel, the Intel Inside and Intel Centrino Logos are trademarks or registered trademarks of Intel Corporation. The AOpen Logo are a registered trademark AOpen Corporation.